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A TWO-PART STORY, BEGINNING IN THIS ISSUE

CHICAGO LEDGER

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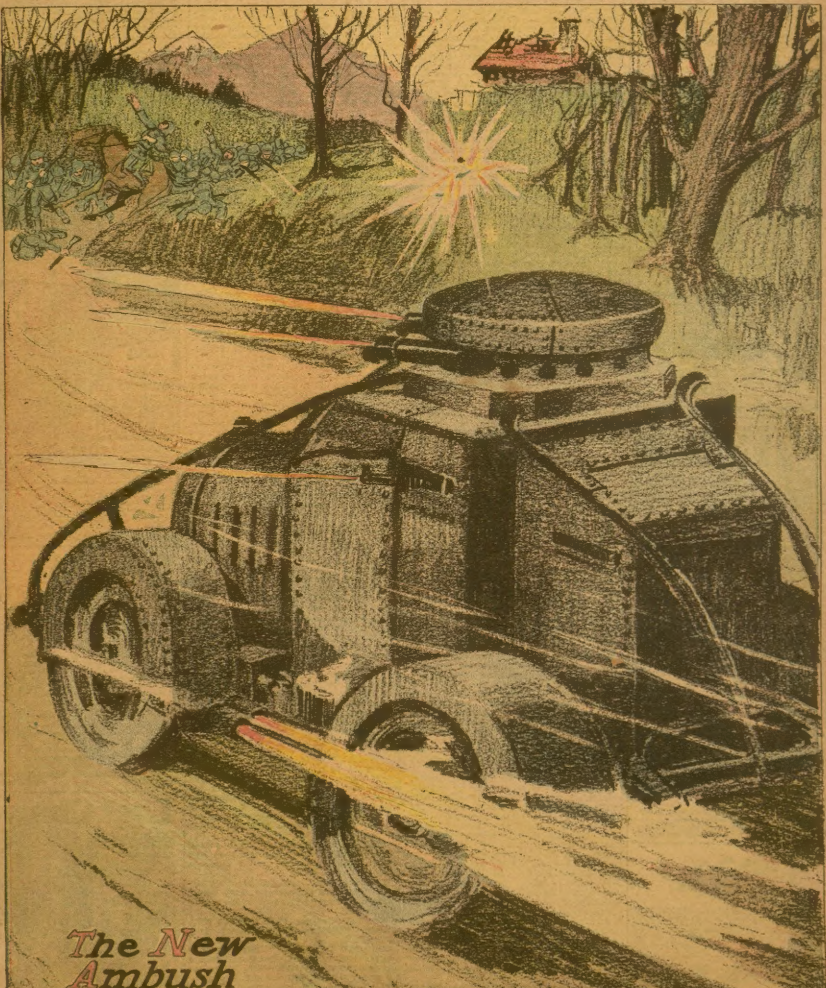

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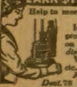

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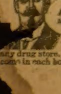

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Worrying About Eulalia

THE tall, lank householder shook his head dubiously. "Now, since the leaves have fallen off the porch vines," he remarked, "I don't exactly see how I am to keep track of the young person across the street and her beaux. I say young person advisedly, for Heaven knows that if Eulalia doesn't nail somebody soon it's all off! She'll have to go in for charity committee work and grow enthusiastic over uplift meetings."

"The idea!" his wife said, severely. "You'd better put in your time attending to your own affairs. The basement needs straightening up."

"Not till I get this Eulalia question off my mind!" firmly objected the tall, lank householder. "The trouble with her is that she is too particular. After she ditched the man who looked like a movie hero I really had hopes of the next one—Rameses X. Copperwhat, who worked in a paper factory. Oh, I know you told me his name was Jones and that he didn't amount to anything, but with my keen judgment I saw possibilities in him. Anyhow, when he's a billionaire and arrested for cornering the market on paper pulp, I'll bet Eulalia will sigh and pause in her laundry work long enough to wish she'd taken him!

"Why, she's just like a woman turned loose in a dress manufactory and told to choose a garment! Any human woman in that case would just rush madly around, flitting from velvet to gingham and changing her mind! If she takes the taffeta silk, how about the peach of a satin frock—and if she chooses a tailor made how on earth can she give up the dream of an evening dress over there?

"The longer you hesitate over anything the harder it is to make a choice! Why, one of the most popular games of solitaire a married woman plays is imagining what kind of a life she would have been having if she had married one of the other men who proposed to her! No matter who Eulalia finally takes she'll have that hanging over her.

"And now whenever there is trouble in the family she will go sit in a corner and brood darkly on how very different everything would have been had she taken Rameses or the one with the profile or the college boy or the minister. It makes it rough on her future husband. If he's the first man his wife ever got engaged to it'll be a cinch, because she never knows there's another man on earth, but if she's a fascinater like Eulalia, who has had a perfect string of adorors, let me tell you he is up against trouble.

"If he snaps at her he knows she is mentally saying, 'Ah, me! Harold never would have spoken to me like that!'

"It is then that a girl remembers the words of wisdom let fall by her mother at which she smiled pityingly at the time.

"'Mother was right,' she mourns. 'What if Jasper Howcome did have a nose pushed into his face and one shoulder higher than the other and sometimes ate with his knife when he thought nobody was looking! To think he bought the best box at the opera this year and owns six motor cars. Why was I so blind?' And then she finishes scrubbing the kitchen floor.

"I hope Eulalia won't get a moment of panic and take whoever happens to be on the spot at the time—a girl does that sometimes when she finds a gray hair—and dye so cheap, too! I'll bet the fellow who called for her last evening earns $12 a week and cooks his own breakfasts! He has a squeaky voice and said 'Yes, sih,' to her father as tho the floorwalker was addressing him.

"I admit that he has beautiful eyes, but that will make no hit with the butcher. Some day when father objects to the cost of her last new hat or mother peevishly asks why she never straightens her bureau drawers, Eulalia will decide she has had enough of parental tyranny and tearfully cast herself upon the sympathetic chest of Chauncey, who will call her poor little girl and then expect her to work sixteen hours a day ever after she marries him and be grateful for the chance.

"I've always kind of liked Eulalia for the way she steps out and the kink she gets on her hair when she twists it up, and her fate worries me. If she'd only marry some one and settle down!"

"We'd have to move if she did," his wife told him. "Your main recreation in life would be gone!"

"Ha!" said the tall, lank householder, joyously. "I do believe you're jealous—that's something for an old chromo like me to have happen to him!"

* * *

Wedded to Truth.

Mr. Justice Darling, in a case where one of the witnesses was obviously perjuring himself, cautioned him, whereupon the witness burst forth:

"My lord, you may believe me or believe me not, but I have not stated a word that is false; I have been wedded to the truth since infancy!"

"Indeed!" came the retort, quick as a lightning flash. "Wedded to the truth since infancy, eh? But"—sweetly—"may I inquire how long you have been a widower?"

His Inevitable Surrender

THE man's wife gave him his second cup of coffee with a beaming smile, which would have aroused his suspicions if he had been in the least observant.

"Now get home early tonight, dear," she told him. "You know that you have to get dressed to go to that dinner with me!"

The man looked bewildered and then the flood of memory overran him. "Now, see here, Lou!" he cried hastily. "If you are talking about that suffrage dinner, you heard all I had to say about it when you first spoke of it! I said then that I wasn't going and I'm still not going!"

"Now, Henry!" she said reproachfully. "Why, you never said any such thing! I thought you were very agreeable about it, and I've been counting on you and all the other women are counting on you——"

"Hah!" said the man. "That's all very well, but you'll have to go some to convince me that you can't understand plain English! Or that a crowd of women are sitting up holding their breath waiting for me to appear to start the band playing! Don't try to softsoap at my age! Go to your old dinner, but don't drag me along!"

"As tho I would!" she said indignantly. "I'd look nice trailing in all by myself, wouldn't I, when all the others had their husbands with them? Besides, I'd worry about you, eating all by yourself——"

"H'm," said the man. "I do it every noon of my life, and the ambulance hasn't had to bring me home yet! Something better than that, woman, something better! Besides, if you went alone, think how distinguished you'd be among all that crowd! Why, you'd have all the men, instead of just me! There is something about a good-looking, lone woman, which arouses chivalrous feelings in the breast of every true man, and I'll bet every darned one of those husbands would just devote himself to making you have a happy evening! Their wives wouldn't care! Every good wife rejoices to see her husband doing a good deed——"

"This is no joking matter!" interrupted his wife, firmly. "There isn't any reason why you shouldn't go except just selfishness! It's going to be a good dinner, too, and you'll meet a lot of fine men——"

"Huh!" said her husband. "They won't be fine if their wives drag them there! They'll be mad and grouchy and fond enough of a stranger to bite his head off! How do you suppose any man is going to be sweet-tempered and give his better nature a chance when he is forced to sit and listen to a pack of women make speeches? Why, he can stay home and hear his wife talk, so what's the use of traveling out in the chilly blasts of winter just to hear a few other unhappy men's wives talk? They——"

"It wouldn't hurt you one bit to hear them talk!" declared his wife. "You might learn a few things!"

"Oh, I don't care how much you vote!" the man told her. "Vote every ten minutes if it amuses you! Only I don't want to be talked to about it! You may give a holdup man your watch if he asks you politely, but that's no reason for him to kick you in the face in addition! I'm going to stay peacefully at home and you women can wrangle——"

"We don't fight at all!" she declared. "And you're certainly going. I've told the cook she can have the evening off, so there won't be any dinner at home!"

"Restaurants," suggested the man defiantly.

The man's wife got up and came around to him. "Henry," she said in dulcet tones. "I don't ask you for many things, do I? I never bother you for sealskin wraps or tiaras or expensive trips. And when I ask you to go to a silly little dinner, it does seem to me——"

"Silly little dinner is right!" growled the man.

"You might humor me!" she ended. "You'll be lots better looking than any of the other husbands, and I want to show you off——"

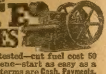
"Oh, why didn't you tell me that before!" he said rapturously. "It would have made all the difference in the world, sweetheart!"

"Don't be disagreeable!" said his wife, sternly. "You're going, aren't you, Heinie?"

"Oh, yes!" he yelled. "Have your own way! Don't mind me! I'm in my dotage and don't know my own mind! Of course I'm going to your blamed old dinner!"

"There!" beamed his wife. "I knew you'd be sensible when you'd thought it over!"

"Durn it!" said the man. "A woman seems to be able to get everything, now that she can vote! It's a dangerous situation and we've got to do something about it!"



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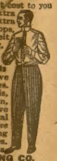

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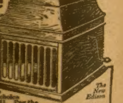

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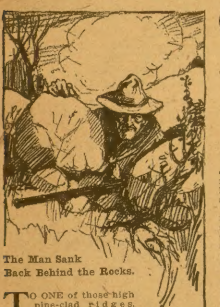
OUT OF THE ASHES

By Lucius Withers

He believed himself a broken man, out of the world for good; She was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Out in the mountains they were brought together and——



The Man Sank Back Behind the Rocks.

TO ONE of those high pine-clad ridges, falling away from the Oregon Blue Range, came Vaughn Lennox, following the death of his wife and 10-year-old son in an Eastern railway accident. There, among the silences, broken only by the warring winds, coyotes and, at long intervals, the puny voices of men, he hoped to heal his hurt.

It was six months after his bereavement that Lennox came to live in a four-room ranch-house set in 250 acres near the crest of Buford's Ridge. He had purchased the ranch by telegraph.

During that interval the inert lassitude which follows great grief seemed to him to be sapping at the foundations of his nature. He sought to continue his work as a successful and promising architect, but tho he nourished a contempt for those who ran away from trouble, his grief conquered. He relinquished his prospects without a sigh.

Lennox sought the Oregon pine country because he believed in nature's power to restore, and because there was something in him which cried out to be restored.

That he was broken and dispirited when he left New York was not patent to public gaze. No one would have guessed but that the broad-shouldered, well-set-up young man, whose clear hazel eyes were set under black, tangled brows and whose forehead, over which straight black hair had begun to grow thin, was a trifle too high, was other than a person with keen interest in life. Lennox was only 38 years old, and most of his life had treated him kindly.

The man's choice of the Oregon pine country was chiefly determined by his memory of a visit made there during boyhood, when with his father he had crossed the mountains on horseback. The range had set its indelible stamp on him, so that now, in the time of his need, he turned toward the towering peaks which he remembered as emblems of quiet peace.

Lennox left New York at the turn of the year when shop windows and streets were ablaze with the wonderful trappings of spring. There was something infinitely sad in his leave-taking; the closing of his big uptown house, the releasing of the servants, all of whom had been in his service almost from the time of his marriage, and the unending throb of life which beat all about this man of shattered hopes.

Two or three of his closest friends attempted to point out to him that a man of 38 might not with impunity break off suddenly in his career. To them he turned a deaf ear; he even considered their timely advice as uncalled-for intrusions.

At Sky Center, where he left the train, Lennox picked up two helpers and a cook. The four of them made the trip to the ranch in a covered wagon drawn by a team which he bought thirty minutes after his arrival.

Thus began Vaughn Lennox's life in the Blue Range. It was wheat-sowing time, and he threw himself into the new work, hoping that a zest for it would come in time. His physical limitations and lack of experience, however, threw the chief burden on his three helpers.

The season deepened. Young green wheat pushed out of the earth, making a carpet for the slanting acres along Buford's Ridge. Up and down the sides of mighty canyons, wild roses, pink and red, spread their snares. Under foot, huckleberry bushes throve, palely green, and put on fruit.

A morose resentment fell upon Lennox—resentment toward nature, because she stretched forth no healing hand. Often he was put to pains to make himself agreeable to those in his employ or to such infrequent visitors as came to the ranch.

Tho he became proficient in the new work, tho his muscles hardened and his face tanned and grew bronzed, the sickness that was in the man's soul stayed there.

But life is like an unfamiliar and crooked road; he who travels it may not know what the next turn will reveal. Destiny, which makes dispositions after her own sweet fashion, had already begun the shaping of big events in which Vaughn Lennox and two women were to play stirring, tho strangely dissimilar, parts.

Back in that vortex of life—New York—Elizabeth Gore, leading woman for the Mozart Opera Company, had just received notice from her physician that she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Close up under the Oregon Blue Range another woman nursed an implacable hatred which cried out for revenge, and both the nervous breakdown of Miss Gore and the desire for revenge in the other woman's breast were destined to touch Vaughn Lennox's life.

It was at the beginning of July, and soon after the gifted possessor of a golden soprano voice had opened a summer engagement, that Miss Gore received her notice. About the same time cattle thieves made themselves manifest along Buford's Ridge. Also, during those early days of July, Vaughn Lennox had pretty conclusively decided that life for him was a profitless adventure.

Nothing could have more displeased Miss Elizabeth Gore than that she should be compelled to quit New York at the beginning of a season which she expected to secure for her a series of European engagements the following winter. But the words of the nerve specialist were uncompromising.

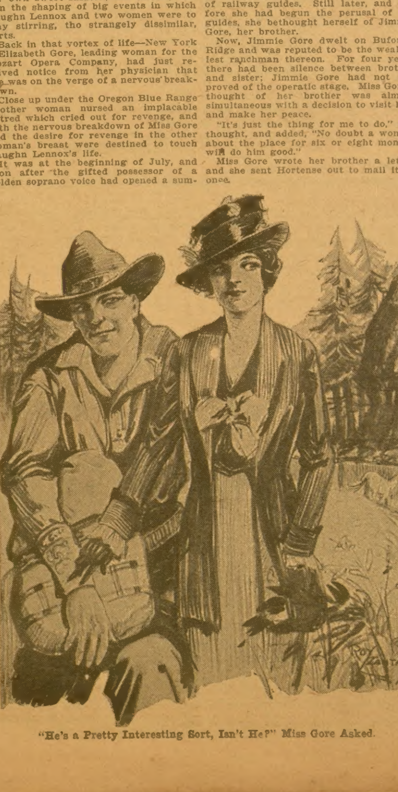
Miss Gore forfeited her contract, while an impressionable impresario tore his hair, for Miss Gore's voice was really wonderful.

Later, the prima donna sent her maid out from her uptown apartment in search of railway guides. Still later, and before she had begun the perusal of the guides, she bethought herself of Jimmie Gore, her brother.

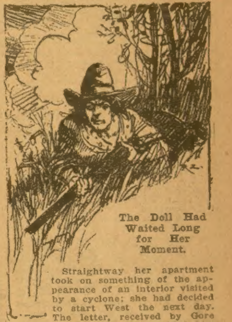
Now, Jimmie Gore dwelt on Buford's Ridge and was reputed to be the wealthiest ranchman thereon. For four years there had been silence between brother and sister; Jimmie Gore had not approved of the operatic stage. Miss Gore's thought of her brother was almost simultaneous with a decision to visit him and make her peace.

"It's just the thing for me to do," she thought, and added, "No doubt a woman about the place for six or eight months will do him good."

Miss Gore wrote her brother a letter and she sent Hortense out to mail it at once.



"He's a Pretty Interesting Sort, Isn't He?" Miss Gore Asked.



The Doll Had Waited Long for Her Moment.

Straightway her apartment took on something of the appearance of an interior visited by a cyclone; she had decided to start West the next day.

The letter, received by Gore four days later, troubled him sorely. But what is a man to do when his sister writes and tells him that one day after the arrival of a letter she will put in an appearance herself?

The day before the letter reached Gore, one of his herds was stampeded and driven from the range five miles north of his home. No trace of the missing cattle or the thieves had been found. Cattle stealing on Buford's Ridge meant war, and war is for men and not women—unless the woman was Old Doll Hendricks, whose lawlessness had long ago forfeited for her all claims of sex. Gore and his men believed that it was Old Doll and her followers who had stampeded his herd.

Horace Kimball, sent by the ranchman to the Doll's home, set in a mountain pocket fifteen miles to the west and across Verblanch's and Dorsey's canyons, returned to report that the place was deserted. The cattle had been tracked for a short distance in many directions, but hoofs leave slight impressions when once off the range and along rocky defiles.

Two seasons before Jimmie Gore had suffered a similar disaster. By rare good fortune he had been able to track the Doll and two of her conspirators back into the mountains. He had forced them, at the point of his carbine, to drive the cattle back to the range; then he had given the men twenty-four hours in which to leave the country. From the Doll he had extracted only the promise to leave his cattle alone.

For the time being, the men had kept their promises and were not seen on the ridges. But later, threats by the Doll that she would be revenged came to Gore's ears from the storekeepers at Sky Center. A man less courageous than Gore would have been terrorized by the threats, for the Doll was known to have murdered her husband in cold blood because of a fancied slight, and she had long been suspected of "cattle running." The name of Old Doll had been given her because of her weazened, waxlike face, almost deathly in its pallid ghastliness.

It was not until Gore's experience with the woman, however, that any crime save that of slaying her husband had been attributed to her.

So disturbed had Jimmie Gore been upon receipt of his sister's letter that he rode ten miles down the ridge to Lennox's ranch to consult with him. Jimmie Gore set great value on Lennox's judgment, probably because the latter had asked the ranchman's advice on various matters, than which there is no surer method of gaining one's good will.

"There is nothing you can do, old man," said Lennox, as he stood beside Gore's horse's head. Gore had declined to dismount for dinner; he was to meet the searchers for the lost twenty-five head of cattle at the ranch-house that afternoon. Maybe they would have something of interest to report. But Old Doll on the warpath, and his sister a guest in his bachelor ranch-house did not fit well in the same picture.

"Hang it all, man," Gore answered, "you know that the Doll has threatened me with fire and death, and d—n her. I am willing for her to try to get me [illegible] she can, but with that sister of mine out here—it puts a new complexion in the situation. Why, man, the Doll might try to trap us coming back from the Center, and I can't spare any of my men to go over there with me. They all have got to look for the cattle. Of course, there is no use trying to turn her back at the Center. If you knew her as well as I do you would agree with me. I tried to keep her off the stage, the only result being from that time until I got this letter I had no news from her except thru the newspapers, and I get them rarely enough."

Gore gazed down at his friend with a lugubrious expression. Lennox broke out laughing. The expression on his friend's face was too much for him.

"Well," he said, after a short interval of merriment, "there is no use worrying about what you cannot help."

Then Lennox thought of his own plight, and his habitual gravity again fell upon him. He added: "I have nothing pressing for the next three or four days and I will go with you to the Center tomorrow. You may need protection. You had better take a sure-footed animal for your sister to ride back." Which advice was entirely unnecessary in the case of Jimmie Gore, reputed to be the most careful man on Buford's Ridge.

Nevertheless, Gore was glad enough to know that he would have company on his eighty-mile ride.

"All right, I am jolly glad that you are going with me," he answered. "So long," he called, as he whirled his bay mare about and galloped off up the ridge.

Lennox stood and watched horse and rider until they were lost over the brow of the nearest hill. His sorrow weighed heavy on him; he could not see beyond the next turn of the road of life. If he had——

Lennox spent the afternoon in repairing a broken barn lot fence, while his men hauled winter wood from up the ridge. But that night, long after his companions had gone to bed, he sat, pipe in hand, in front of the ranch-house door. He did not contemplate the glory and splendor of moonlight in the mountains; he drew comparisons between his lot and that of Jimmie Gore. Tomorrow Jimmie Gore would meet his sister. The morrow would bring forth no new thing for him.

The next day the two men started early on their journey. Gore had to wait only long enough for his friend to fasten his poncho and blanket at the back of the saddle. They would ride twenty miles before nightfall. Then they would camp for the night, to recommence the journey the next day.

That night, as the two sat about the little campfire over which they prepared their supper, Gore said: "It would be just like the Doll to make trouble for us on this trip; that is, if she learns that only the two of us are hiking. She's out for my blood, and I don't care a tinker's d—n about that; fact is, I would rather welcome a brush with her and that gang of cutthroats if they would only strike before we get Bessie on our hands. But a battle with a girl along would be d—d uncomfortable, eh?"

Not being able to think of an adequate answer, Lennox nodded. A few minutes later the two men knocked out their pipes, rolled themselves in their blankets and went peacefully to sleep under the towering pines. But Jimmie Gore and his friend would have slumbered less deeply had they known of certain happenings which, even then, were coming to pass.

That morning, almost immediately after Jimmie Gore had left his ranch-house, Billy Bracket, Gore's newest cowpuncher, was stricken with a sudden illness which made it necessary for the others to leave him behind when they started on their search for the missing cattle.

Thirty minutes after they had gone, Bracket left his bunk and went back to the kitchen where Lee Yen, the Chinese cook, was busy among his pots and pans.

"Me feelee bletter, Lee Yen," said Bracket, falling into pidgin English.

"Me glau," responded the Chinaman, noncommittally.

"Me go for ride; do me good," went on Bracket.

Lee Yen nodded and continued with his work.

Ten minutes later Bracket headed his horse at a gallop along the northward running ridge road. For five miles he kept steadily to the road; then he swung into a precipitous path which followed the edge of a gulch dropping away toward Dorsey's canyon. Halfway down the gulch he guided his horse abruptly to the right and into a small pocket, wherein were pitched two weatherbeaten and dilapidated tents. Two men and a woman were seated on the ground in front of one of the tents. No one having heard of her might mistake the waxen face of the Doll. Bracket seemed to know her companions well. Three poorly fed horses grazed on stringy grass in a corner of the pocket.

Bracket spoke to the woman: "Missus Hendricks, you kin get the rest of them thar cattle now or tomorrer; Jim went to the Center today to meet his sister, and the boys is so busy looking for you thet they won't be in the way."

While Bracket was speaking the Doll sprang to her feet. For the first time in a long, long while a faint flush of rose stained the hollows of her pallid cheeks.

"Did he go over to the Center by hisself?" she inquired harshly, gazing at Bracket. Her beady black eyes seemed on fire.

"Yep, by hisself," answered the cowpuncher.

"To h—l with them steers then!" rasped the Doll, and went on rapidly: "He pinted his gun at me once! He made me eat dirt, the dog! And he made Phil and Ike here eat dirt, too. To h—l with them steers. I got better bucking to do now than running them cows."

The three men gazed at the passion-swayed woman in amazement. Into the eyes of Billy Bracket there crept something like loathing—loathing and fear. Until a month before he had been an honest cowpuncher. Then this woman and her helpers, spotting the weak place in his nature, had corrupted him with visions of gain. Since then he had been their tool. He had played his part in the recent stampede, but there were limits to Billy Bracket's villainy. If fear and loathing leaped into Billy Bracket's face, only admiration and exultation showed in the eyes of the others.

Bracket broke the tense silence which followed the woman's words.

"But Missus Hendricks, haint you a-going a little too fur?"

"Too fur!" shot back the woman, her voice sounding a new note of menace. "I suppose being so free with your bucking you'll be telling on the bunch next."

Bracket's face whitened; he held up a sunburned and disclaiming hand.

"I hain't no such thing," he said.

"Git him, boys, and tie him up," ordered the Doll, tersely.

A moment later Bracket was ruefully regarding the toes of his boots as he sat alone in the Doll's tent, his hands and feet bound. There was no need of a gag, and Billy Bracket knew it.

Soon after the detention of Billy Bracket another horseman made his appearance in the pocket, after which Ike Stevens was designated by the Doll to keep watch over the prisoner.

After a short parley the woman and the two other men rode away by the one trail which led from their hiding-place.

* * * * * * *

Elizabeth Gore left the sleeping-car at Sky Center in a calmer mood than she had known for a long time. The orders of her physician she had resented, while before that time she had labored under a nervous strain which had been inimical to health and temper. Moreover, like the majority of popular workers in her particular art, she had nourished a growing egotism and selfishness. Therefore that morning when she had awakened to find her train among these mountains which make the great Northwest, God's out-of-door temple, a new discomfort fell upon her. The great towering masses dwarfed and engulfed her—and because of this she liked them not

But as the day wore on the girl's deeper and more intimate nature answered the vital call of snow-capped peaks and shadowy canyons. Exhilaration and exaltation came over her, to be followed by the restful, conscious calm and assurance that she and these mountains were children of a common mother. Then there came to her the vague, alluring sense that she was standing before a closed door which would presently be opened to reveal many things which she longed to know.

This mood was upon Miss Gore when she descended, bag and baggage, from the sleeper at Sky Center.

Only three persons—three men—stood upon the station platform. The girl was at once able to identify one of them as the station agent. The other two, wearing chaps, brown shirts and wide gray hats and with blue handkerchiefs about their necks, she took to be cowboys.

She was suddenly possessed by anger that her brother was not at the station to meet her. This was followed by a vague feeling of fear, when the two cowboys came toward her along the platform. She was on the eve of calling to the station agent for protection, when one of the men called to her in a familiar tone. She dropped her traveling bag and a suitcase and gazed at her brother in amazement. Then, with a glad cry, which straightway consigned to the limbo of forgotten things all of their brotherly and sisterly differences, she sprang into Jimmie Gore's arms.

"Why, you big barbarian!" she said, after Gore had presented Lennox. "I never would have recognized you."

Miss Gore had never seen her brother in his workaday costume. Such visits as he had made her after the death of her mother and before there was a breach between them, he had made clad in the attire with which she was familiar.

From the moment that he caught sight of Elizabeth Gore, Lennox felt a quickening of interest. And Miss Gore had not presented an uninteresting appearance as she stood confused and surprised at the appearance of her brother.

Straight and rather slender, clad in her blue serge traveling suit, the woman seemed a piquant figure against the golden afternoon sunlight which streamed from over the western mountains. For the first time in many, many months Vaughn Lennox felt his blood beat quicker.

He wondered in a vague sort of way just why this should be. Was it because of Elizabeth Gore's deep blue eyes? He had seen eyes more beautiful. Was it because of that wonderful golden voice that did not require singing to reveal its lyric charm? He had heard other wonderful voices. Was it because of her innate modesty of manner, her whole-souled acceptance of him because he was her brother's friend? He had known other women equally as modest and as charming. These questions quickened in the man's mind as they walked from the station to the tethered horses, and remained with him even after they had ridden out from the straggling streets of Sky Center and turned their horses' heads toward home and the night's bivouac among the pines.

With appraising eye Lennox noted that the girl wore her divided riding skirts as if she were used to them. But with an inward smile he pondered that she would soon learn the difference between mountain trails and park driveways.

Lennox wondered if the Doll would make trouble for them. "But how can she when she does not even know that Gore and I went to Sky Center?" he asked himself.

Somewhere back in the man's mind he began to sense that his life road had made an unexpected turn, revealing what might be unusually desirable prospects. But neither he nor Jimmie Gore knew that the waxen-faced Ida Hendricks, euphoniously called the Doll, with two male companions, had ridden hard all the night before that they might come upon the little cavalcade at an auspicious point.

By dark the party from Sky Center had traveled sixteen miles. The three riders halted among gigantic pines near the crest of Saw Tooth Ridge.

That ride had been a revelation to Elizabeth Gore, who heretofore had felt that her art had carried her to the summits of exaltation.

Because of the perilous nature of the trail along which they rode their progress had been slow, and, to the girl, touched with hazards, but the glorious prospect of towering mountains, white foaming waterfalls, and druid pines lifted her out of herself.

From an open space close beside the pines in which they would camp, they turned and gazed into the west. The girl cried out in delight.

The sky was a riot of color, wonderfully intertangled with mist, so that one might not say where mountain left off or cloud began. Directly over head the heavens were faint mauve, which deepened into reds, purples and wonderful golds. Set on what seemed the crests of the mountains were great streams of golden light upjetting toward the zenith, as if Olympian warriors had posted gigantic signals of battle.

Miss Gore lost herself in contemplation of the scene. Into her face came a wonderful new light, and Vaughn Lennox thought, as he watched her, that he had never seen a face quite so beautiful.

The girl turned to meet his eye. In them the man thought he saw a light leap to life in answer to the fire of his own being. She spoke and her golden voice lingered over the words.

"It would be a desecration to attempt to describe it," she said in an awed voice, making a sweeping gesture toward the sunset.

The two men nodded, but one of them thought of the woman's face and not of the sunset.

Darkness fell quickly while the men unsaddled and tethered their horses, after watering them at a nearby spring. Lennox busied himself in kindling a fire and bringing water. While he was fetching the latter Miss Gore spoke to her brother.

"He's a pretty interesting sort, isn't he, and unusual for this country?" she asked.

"Yes, he is both," answered Gore, and added, "He lost a wife and child in a railway wreck in New Jersey almost a year ago, deserted brilliant prospects and came off out here, evidently to bury his troubles."

A flash of remembrance darted across the girl's face.

"Oh, I remember something about it in the newspapers at the time! It was awful. He's the man who designed St. Paul's Church and the Colonial-Manhattan Hotel. Why, Jimmie! He's quite somebody!"

The last words were spoken in a low tone as Lennox was returning with a pail of water. Gore was therefore unable to answer his sister, but there sprang in him a new admiration for Lennox, whose achievements had not been boasted in his ears.

Following her brother's revelation, Miss Gore looked on her companion with eyes in which there was something of maternal pity, and had Lennox been more of an egotist he would have noted a subtle softening in her whole manner toward him.

By the light of the new blaze Gore cut strips of bacon and mixed flour with water. Supper was to get, even if it consisted only of dough gards and salt meat. Lennox examined the loaded carbines, while the prima donna gazed with interest from one man to the other. But chiefly she looked at the man who examined the carbines. He had suddenly become clothed in new raiment for her.

The broken meats cast away following the meal, Gore and Lennox, after making the girl a comfortable seat with saddle and blankets, lit their pipes.

The Doll, the thought of whom had troubled Gore the day before, seemed to have passed completely from the minds of both men. All about the three was the great primeval silence, save for the sound of the wind in the treetops and now and then the distant bark of a hungry coyote as it searched abroad for quarry.

Darkness crept up out of the gorges and laid its cloak upon the high places; the two men and Elizabeth Gore slept. The embers of the little campfire blackened, while twenty yards away behind a group of rugged rocks two men and a woman watched the fire as it died down to ashes. The Doll had waited long for her moment, and she found its coming sweet.

"Hesh!" she exclaimed, in a fierce whisper, as one of the men beside her stirred.

"Hesh, you d—n fool, not yit! Does you want to spile the whole thing right at the end?"

The man sank back in his seat behind the rocks.

In the darkness the Doll's white cheeks again took on that faint rose color that had characterized them during her interview with Billy Bracket; in her eyes there burned again the smoldering fire kindled by the man who had made her "eat dirt." But she did not intend that her opportunity for revenge should escape her because of over-eagerness.

The three tense figures sat rigidly in the gloom. The two men breathed evenly, but the Doll's breath came in short quick gasps, as if, now in the moment preceding revenge her pent rage clutched fingers about her throat.

"Idy, I shore would like to smoke—my lungs is jest a-achin'!" exclaimed one of the men, in a sibilant undertone.

The woman turned fiercely upon her companion. With a swift motion she drew her revolver from the holster at her side and rammed the nose of the weapon against his chest: "If you open your head again, Jep Judson, I'll kill you where you sits!"

Judson made no sound, the woman withdrew the weapon and again turned her attention to where her intended victims slept tranquilly.

Five minutes passed, during which

(Continued on Page 14.)

THE VICTOR

"Who can make women discreet?"
Conscience tried in vain;
Policy met with defeat;
Pride gave up in pain.

Experience didn't succeed;
Vanity failed at last;
Friendship would vainly plead;
Duty wept, aghast.

"Who can make women discreet?
Is there no power so high
He may perform this feat?"
Proudly spake Love: "Yes, I!"

—Carolyn Wells, in Life.

THE SHINING BAND

By Robert W. Chambers

O'Hara died, leaving a beautiful daughter, a mysterious black box and a situation that required a cool, masterful mind to straighten out. You'll not be happy until you find out what happened.

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CHAPTER I.

BEFORE the members of the Sagamore Fish and Game Association had erected their handsome clubhouse, and before they had begun to purchase those thousands of acres of forest, mountain, and stream which now belonged to them, a speculative lumberman with no capital, named O'Hara, built the white house across the river on a few acres of inherited property, settled himself comfortably with his wife and child, and prepared to acquire all the timber in sight at a few dollars an acre—on credit. For thus, thought he, is the beginning of all millionaires.

So certain was O'Hara of ultimately cornering the standing timber that he took his time about it, never dreaming that a rival might disturb him in the wilderness of Sagamore County.

He began in the woodland which he had inherited, which ran for a mile on either side of the river. This he leisurely cut, hired a few river drivers, ran a few logs to Foxville, and made money.

Now he was ready to extend business on a greater scale; but when he came to open negotiations with the score or more of landholders, he found himself in the alarming position of a bidder against an unknown but clever rival, who watched, waited, and quietly forestalled his every movement.

It took a long time for O'Hara to discover that he was fighting a combination of fifteen wealthy gentlemen from New York. Finally, when the Sagamore Club, limited to fifteen, had completed operations, O'Hara suddenly perceived that he was bottled up in the strip of worthless land which he had inherited, surrounded by thousands of acres of preserved property—outwitted, powerless, completely hemmed in. And that, too, with the best log-driving water betwixt Foxville and Canada washing the very door-sill of his own home.

At first he naturally offered to sell, but the club's small offer enraged him, and he swore that he would never sell them an inch of his land. He watched the new clubhouse which was slowly taking shape under the trowels of masons and the mallets of carpenters; and his wrath grew as grew the house.

The man's nature began to change; an inextinguishable hatred for these people took possession of him, became his mania, his existence.

His wife died; he sent his child to a convent school in Canada and remained to watch. He did the club what damage he could, posting his property, and as much of the river as he controlled. But he could not legally prevent fishermen from wading the stream and fishing; so he filled the waters with sawdust, logs, barbed wire, brambles, and brush, choking it so that no living creature, except perhaps a mink, could catch a fish in it.

The club protested, and then offered to buy the land on O'Hara's own terms. O'Hara cursed them and built a dam without a fishway, and sat beside it with a loaded shotgun.

He still had a few dollars left; he wanted millions to crush these rich men who had come here to mock him and take the bread out of his mouth for their summer's sport.

He had a shrewd young friend in New York, named Amasa Munn. Thru this man, O'Hara began to speculate in every wildcat scheme that squalled aloud for public support; and between Munn and the wildcats his little fortune spread its wings of gold and soared away, leaving him a wreck on his wrecked land.

But he could still find strength to watch the spite dam with his shotgun. One day a better scheme came into his unbalanced brain; he broke the dam and sent for Munn. Between them they laid a plan to ruin forever the trout-fishing in the Sagamore; and Munn, taking the last of O'Hara's money as a bribe, actually secured several barrels full of live pickerel, and shipped them to the nearest station on the Sagamore and Inland Railway.

But here the club watchers caught Munn, and held him and his fish for the game wardens. The penalty for introducing trout-destroying pickerel into waters inhabited by trout was a heavy fine. Munn was guilty only in intent, but the club keepers swore falsely, and Peyster Sprowl, a lawyer and also the new president of the Sagamore Club, pushed the case; and Munn went to jail, having no money left to purge his sentence.

O'Hara, wild with rage, wrote, threatening Sprowl.

Then Sprowl did a vindictive and therefore foolish thing; he swore out a warrant for O'Hara's arrest, charging him with blackmail.

The case was tried in Foxville, and O'Hara was acquitted. But a chance word or two during the testimony frightened the club and gave O'Hara the opportunity of his life. He went to New York and scraped up enough money for—his purpose, which was to search the titles of the lands controlled by the Sagamore Club.

He worked secretly, grubbing, saving, starving; he ferreted out the original grants covering nine-tenths of Sagamore County; he disinterred the O'Hara patent of 1760; and then he began to understand that his title to the entire Sagamore Club property was worth the services, on spec., of any first-class Center street shyster.

The club got wind of this and appointed Peyster Sprowl, in his capacity of lawyer and president of the club, to find out how much of a claim O'Hara really had. The club also placed the emergency fund of one hundred thousand dollars at Sprowl's command with carte-blanche orders to arrest a suit and satisfy any claim that could not be beaten by money and talent.

Now it took Sprowl a very short time to discover that O'Hara's claim was probably valid enough to oust the club from three-quarters of its present holdings.

He tried to see O'Hara, but the lumberman refused to be interviewed, and promptly began proceedings. He also made his will, for he was a sick man. Then he became a sicker man, and suspended proceedings and sent for his little daughter.

Before she arrived he called Munn in, gave him a packet of papers, and made him burn them before his eyes.

"They're the papers in my case," he said. "I'm dying; I've fought too hard. I don't want my child to fight when I'm dead. And there's nothing in my claim, anyway." This was a lie, and Munn suspected it.

When the child, Eileen, arrived, O'Hara was nearly dead, but he gathered sufficient strength to shove a locked steel box toward his daughter and tell her to keep it from Munn, and keep it locked until she found an honest man in the world.

The next morning O'Hara appeared to be much better. His friend Munn came to see him; also came Peyster Sprowl in some alarm, on the matter of the proceedings threatened. But O'Hara turned his back on them both and calmly closed his eyes and ears to their presence.

Munn went out of the room, but laid his large, thin ear against the door. Sprowl worried O'Hara for an hour, but, getting no reply from the man in the bed, withdrew at last with considerable violence.

O'Hara, however, had fooled them both; he had been dead all the while.

The day after the funeral, Sprowl came back to look for O'Hara's daughter; and as he peeped into the door of the squalid flat he saw a thin, yellow-eyed young man, with a bony face, all furry in promise of future whiskers, rummaging thru O'Hara's effects. This young gentleman was Munn.

In a dark corner of the disordered room sat the child, Eileen, a white, shadowy elf of 6, reading in the Book of Common Prayer.

Sprowl entered the room; Munn looked up, then coolly continued to rummage.

Sprowl first addressed himself to the child, in a heavy, patronizing voice:

"It's too dark to read there in that corner, young one. Take your book out into the hall."

"I can see better to read in the dark," said the child, lifting her great, dark-blue eyes.

"Go out into the hall," said Sprowl, sharply.

The child shrank back, and went, taking her little jacket in one hand, her battered traveling-satchel in the other.

If the two men could have known that the steel box was in that satchel this story might never have been. But it never entered their heads that the pallid little waif had sense enough to conceal a button to her own profit.

"Munn," said Sprowl, lighting a cigar, "what is there in this business?"

"I'll tell you when I'm done," observed Munn, coolly.

Sprowl sat down on the bed where O'Hara had died, cocked the cigar up in his mouth, and blew smoke, musingly, at the ceiling.

Munn found nothing—not a scrap of paper, not a line. This staggered him, but he did not intend that Sprowl should know it.

"Found what you want?" asked Sprowl, comfortably.

"Yes," replied Munn.

"Belong to the kid?"

"Yes; I'm her guardian."

The men measured each other in silence for a minute.

"What will you take to keep quiet?" asked Sprowl. "I'll give you a thousand dollars."

"I want five thousand," said Munn, firmly.

"I'll double it for the papers," said Sprowl.

Munn waited. "There's not a paper left," he said; "O'Hara made me burn 'em.

"Twenty thousand for the papers," said Sprowl, calmly.

"My God, Mr. Sprowl!" growled Munn, white and sweating with anguish. "I'd give them to you for half that if I had them. Can't you believe me? I saw O'Hara burn them."

"What were you rummaging for, then?" demanded Sprowl.

"For anything—to get a hold on you," said Munn, sullenly.

"Blackmail?"

Munn was silent.

"Oh," said Sprowl, lazily. "I think I'll be going, then——"

Munn barred his exit, choking with anger.

"You give me five thousand dollars, or I'll stir 'em up to look into your titles!" he snarled.

Sprowl regarded him with contempt; then another idea struck him, an idea that turned his fat face first to ashes, then to fire.

A month later Sprowl returned to the Sagamore Club, triumphant, good-humored, and exceedingly contented. But he had, he explained, only succeeded in saving the club at the cost of the entire emergency fund—one hundred thousand dollars—which, after all, was a drop in the bucket to the remaining fourteen members.

The victory would have been complete if Sprowl had also been able to purchase the square mile of land lately occupied by O'Hara. But this belonged to O'Hara's daughter, and the child flatly refused to part with it.

"You'll have to wait for the little slut to change her mind," observed Munn to Sprowl. And, as there was nothing else to do, Sprowl and the club waited.

Trouble appeared to be over for the Sagamore Club. Munn disappeared; the daughter was not to be found; the long-coveted land remained tenantless.

Of course, the Sagamore Club encountered the petty difficulties and annoyances to which similar clubs are sooner or later subjected; disputes with neighboring landowners were gradually adjusted; troubles arising from poachers, dishonest keepers, and night guards had been, and continued to be, settled without harshness or rancor; minks, otters, herons, kingfishers, and other undesirable intruders were kept within limits by the guns of the watchers, altho by no means exterminated; and the wealthy club was steadily but unostentatiously making vast additions to its splendid tracts of forest, hill, and river land.

After a decent interval the Sagamore Club made cautious inquiries concerning the property of the late O'Hara, only to learn that the land had been claimed by Munn, and that taxes were paid on it by that individual.

For fifteen years the O'Hara house remained tenantless; anglers from the club fished freely thru the mile of river; the name of Munn had been forgotten save by the club's treasurer, secretary, and president, Peyster Sprowl.

However, the members of the club never forgot that in the center of their magnificent domain lay a square mile which did not belong to them; and they longed to possess it as better people than they have coveted treasures not laid up on earth.

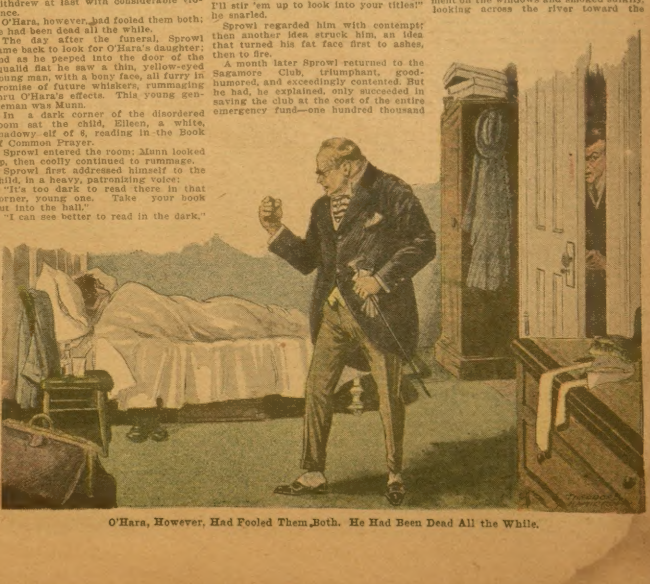
The relations existing between the members of the Sagamore Club continued harmonious in as far as their social intercourse and the general acquisitive policy of the club was concerned.

There existed, of course, that tacit mutual derision based upon individual sporting methods, individual preferences, obstinate theories concerning the choice of rods, reels, lines, and the killing properties of favorite trout-flies.

Major Brent and Colonel Hyssop continued to nag and sneer at each other all day long, yet they remained as mutually dependent upon each other as David and Jonathan. For thirty years the old gentlemen had angled in company, and gathered inspiration out of the same books, the same surroundings, the same flask.

They were the only guests at the clubhouse that wet May in 1900, altho Peyster Sprowl was expected in June, and young Dr. Lansing had wired that he might arrive any day.

An evening rainstorm was drenching the leaded panes in the smoking-room. Colonel Hyssop drummed accompaniment on the windows and smoked sulkily, looking across the river toward the



O'Hara, However, Had Fooled Them Both. He Had Been Dead All the While.

O'Hara house, just visible thru the pelting downpour.

"Irritates me every time I see it," he said.

"Some day," observed Major Brent, comfortably, "I'm going to astonish you all.

"How?" demanded the Colonel, tersely.

The Major examined the end of his cigarette with a cunning smile.

"It isn't for sale, is it?" asked the Colonel. "Don't try to be mysterious; it irritates me."

Major Brent savored his cigarette leisurely.

"Can you keep a secret?" he inquired.

The Colonel intimated profanely that he could.

"Well, then," said the Major, in calm triumph, "there's a tax sale on tomorrow at Foxville."

"Not the O'Hara place?" asked the Colonel, excited.

The Major winked. "I'll fix it," he said, with a patronizing squint at his empty glass.

But he did not "fix it" exactly as he intended; the taxes on the O'Hara place were being paid at that very moment.

He found it out next day when he drove over to Foxville; he also learned that the Rev. Amasa Munn, Prophet of the Shining Band Community, had paid the taxes and was preparing to quit Maine and re-establish his colony of fanatics on the O'Hara land, in the very center and heart of the wealthiest and most rigidly exclusive country club in America.

That night the frightened Major telegraphed to Munnville, Maine, an offer to buy the O'Hara place at double its real value. The business-like message ended, "Wire reply at my expense."

The next morning an incoherent reply came by wire, at the Major's expense, refusing to sell, and quoting several passages of Scripture at Western Union rates per word.

The operator at the station counted the words carefully, and collected eight dollars and fourteen cents from the Major, whose fury deprived him of speech.

Colonel Hyssop awaited his comrade at the clubhouse, nervously pacing the long veranda, gnawing his cigar. "Hello!" he called out, as Major Brent waddled up. "Have you bought the O'Hara place for us?"

The Major made no attempt to reply; he panted violently at the Colonel, then began to run about, taking little, short, distracted steps.

"Made a mess of it?" inquired the Colonel, with a badly concealed sneer.

He eyed the Major in deepening displeasure. "If you get any redder in the face you'll blow up," he said, coldly; "and I don't propose to have you spatter me."

"He—he's an impudent swindler!" hissed the Major, convulsively.

The Colonel sniffed: "I expected it. What of it? After all, there's nobody on the farm to annoy us, is there?"

"Wait!" groaned the Major—"wait!" and he toddled into the hall and fell on a chair, beating space with his pudgy hands.

When the Colonel at last learned the nature of the threatened calamity, he utterly refused to credit it.

"Rubbish!" he said, calmly—"rubbish! my dear fellow; this man Munn is holding out for more money, d'ye see? Rubbish! rubbish! It's blackmail, d'ye see?"

"Do you think so?" faltered the Major, hopefully. "It isn't possible that they mean to come, is it? Fancy all those fanatics shouting about under our windows——"

"Rubbish!" said the Colonel, calmly. "I'll write to the fellow myself."

All thru that rainy month of May the two old cronies had the clubhouse to themselves; they slopped about together, fishing cheek by jowl as they had fished for thirty years; at night they sat late over their toddy, and disputed and bickered and wagged their fingers at each other, and went to bed with the perfect gravity of gentlemen who could hold their own with any toddy ever brewed.

No reply came to the Colonel, but that did not discourage him.

"They are playing a waiting game," he said sagely. "This man Munn has bought the land from O'Hara's daughter for a song, and he means to bleed us. I'll write to Sprowl; he'll fix things."

Early in June Dr. Lansing and his young kinsman, De Witt Coursay, arrived at the clubhouse. They, also, were of the opinion that Munn's object was to squeeze the club by threats.

The second week in June, Peyster Sprowl, Master of Foxhounds, Shadowbrook, appeared with his wife, the celebrated beauty, Agatha Sprowl, nee Van Guilder.

Sprowl, now immensely large and fat, had few cares in life beyond an anxious apprehension concerning the durability of his own digestion. However, he was still able to make a midnight mouthful of a Welsh rarebit on a hot mince-pie, and wash it down with a quart of champagne, and so the world went very well with him, even if it wabbled a trifle for his handsome wife.

"She's lovely enough," said Colonel Hyssop, gallantly, "to set every star in heaven wabbling." To which the bull-necked Major assented with an ever-hopeless attempt to bend at the waistband.

Meanwhile the Rev. Amasa Munn and his flock, the Shining Band, arrived at Foxville in six farm wagons, singing "Roll, Jordan!"

Of their arrival Sprowl was totally unconscious, the Colonel having forgotten to inform him of the threatened invasion.

CHAPTER II.

THE members of the Sagamore Club heard the news next morning at a late breakfast. Major Brent, who had been fishing early upstream, bore the news, and delivered it in an incoherent bellow.

"What d'ye mean by that?" demanded Colonel Hyssop, setting down his cocktail with unsteady fingers.

"Mean?" roared the Major; "I mean that Munn and a lot o' women are sitting on the river-bank and singing 'Home Again'!"

The news jarred everybody, but the effect of it upon the president, Peyster Sprowl, appeared to be out of all proportion to its gravity. That gentleman's face was white as death, and the Major noticed it.

"You'll have to rid us of this mob," said the Major, slowly.

Sprowl lifted his heavy, overfed face from his plate. "I'll attend to it," he said, hoarsely, and swallowed a pint of claret.

"I think it is amusing," said Agatha Sprowl, looking across the table at Coursay.

"Amusing, madam!" burst out the Major. "They'll be doing their laundry in our river next!"

"Soapsuds in my favorite pools!" bawled the Colonel. "Damme if I'll permit it!"

"Sprowl ought to settle them," said Lansing, good-naturedly. "It may cost us a few thousands, but Sprowl will do the work this time as he did it before."

Sprowl choked in his claret, turned a vivid beef-color, and wiped his chin. His appetite was ruined. He hoped the ruin would stop there.

He

WHITE-HAIRED and blue-eyed and fat, so fat that when he laughed he laughed all over himself, and when he sat he piled up in his chair like a young mountain.

She

ATHLETIC looking, with flaming black eyes and shining black hair; tall, imperious and with a contralto voice that thrilled you thru and thru. She was a Red Cross nurse.

SUPPOSE you had been he and Fate had cast you adrift in mid-Atlantic with a life belt and you had found her in the same predicament, and she had told you it was none of your business. What would you have done? Their story is told in next week's Ledger in a clever story, entitled, "Christmas and Her Spy."

"What harm will they do?" asked Coursay, seriously—"beyond the soapsuds?"

"They'll fish, they'll throw tin cans in the water, they'll keep us awake with their fanatical powwows—confound it, haven't I seen that sort of thing?" said the Major, passionately. "Yes, I have, at nigger camp meetings! And these people beat the niggers at that sort of thing!"

"Leave 'em to me," repeated Peyster Sprowl, thickly, and began on another chop from force of habit.

"About fifteen years ago," said the Colonel, "there was some talk about our title. You fixed that, didn't you, Sprowl?"

"Yes," said Sprowl, with parched lips.

"Of course," muttered the Major; "it cost us a cool hundred thousand to perfect our title. Thank God it's settled."

Sprowl's immense body turned perfectly cold; he buried his face in his glass and drained it. Then the shrimp-color returned to his neck and ears, and deepened to scarlet. When the earth ceased reeling before his apoplectic eyes, he looked around, furtively. Again the scene in O'Hara's death-chamber came to him; the threat of Munn, who had got wind of the true situation, and the bribing of Munn to silence.

But the club had given Sprowl one hundred thousand dollars to perfect its title; and Sprowl had reported the title perfect, all proceedings ended, and the payment of one hundred thousand dollars to Amasa Munn, as guardian of the child of O'Hara, in full payment for the O'Hara claims to the club property.

Sprowl's coolness began to return. If five thousand dollars had stopped Munn's mouth once, it might stop it again. Besides, how could Munn know that Sprowl had kept for his own use ninety-five thousand dollars of his club's money, and had founded upon it the House of Sprowl of many millions? He was quite cool now—a trifle anxious to know what Munn meant to ask for, but confident that his millions were a buckler and a shield to the honored name of Sprowl.

"I'll see this fellow, Munn, after breakfast," he said, lighting an expensive cigar.

"I'll go with you," volunteered Lansing, casually, strolling out toward the veranda.

"No, no!" called out Sprowl; "you'll only hamper me." But Lansing did not hear him outside in the sunshine.

Agatha Sprowl laid one fair, heavily ringed hand on the table and pushed her chair back. The Major gallantly waddled to withdraw her chair; she rose with a gesture of thanks, and a glance which shot the Major thru and thru—a wound he never could accustom himself to receive with stoicism.

Mrs. Sprowl turned carelessly away, followed by her two Great Danes—a superb trio, woman and dogs beautifully built and groomed, and expensive enough to please even such an amateur as Peyster Sprowl, M. F. H.

"Gad, Sprowl!" sputtered the Major, "your wife grows handsomer every minute—and you grow fatter."

Sprowl, midway in a glass of claret, said: "This simple backwoods regime is what she and I need."

Agatha Sprowl was certainly handsome, but the Major's eyesight was none of the best. She had not been growing younger; there were lines; also a discreet employment of tints on a very silky skin, which was not quite as fresh as it had once been.

Dr. Lansing, strolling on the veranda with his pipe, met her and her big dogs turning the corner in full sunlight. Coursay was with her, his eager, flushed face close to hers; but he fell back when he saw his kinsman Lansing, and presently retired to the lawn to unreel and dry out a couple of wet silk lines.

Agatha Sprowl sat down on the veranda railing, exchanging a gay smile across the lawn with Coursay; then her dark eyes met Lansing's steel-gray ones.

"Good morning, once more," she said, mockingly.

He returned her greeting, and began to change his mist leader for a white one.

"Will you kindly let Jack Coursay alone?" she said, in a low voice.

"No," he replied, in the same tone.

"Are you serious?" she asked, as tho the idea amused her.

"Of course," he replied, pleasantly.

"Is it true that you came here because he came?" she inquired, with faint sarcasm in her eyes.

"Yes," he answered, with perfect good-nature. "You see he's my own kin; you see I'm the old-fashioned sort—a perfect fool, Mrs. Sprowl."

There was silence; he unwound the glistening leader; she flicked at shadows with her dog-whip; the Great Danes yawned and laid their heavy heads against her knees.

"Then you are a fool," she concluded, serenely.

He was young enough to redden.

Three years ago she had thought it time to marry somebody, if she ever intended to marry at all; so she threw over half a dozen young fellows like Coursay, and married Sprowl. For two years her beauty, audacity, and imprudence kept a metropolis and two capitals in food for scandal. And now for a year gossip was coupling her name with Coursay's.

"I warned you at Palm Beach that I'd stop this," said Lansing, looking directly into her eyes. "You see, I know his mother."

"Stop what?" he asked, coolly.

He went on: "Jack is a curiously decent boy; he views his danger without panic, but with considerable surprise. But nobody can tell what he may do. As for me, I'm indifferent, liberal, and reasonable in my views of—other people's conduct. But Jack is not one of those 'other people,' you see."

"And I am?" she suggested, serenely.

"Exactly; I am not your keeper."

"So you confine your attention to Jack and the Decalogue?"

"As for the Commandments," observed Lansing, "any ass can shatter them with his hind heels, so why should he? If he must be an ass, let him be an original ass—not a cur."

"A cur," repeated Agatha Sprowl, unsteadily.

"An affaire de coeur with a married woman is an affair do cur," said Lansing, calmly—"Gallicize it as you wish, make it smart and fashionable as you can. I told you I was old-fashioned. And I mean it, madam."

The leader had eluded him; he uncoiled it again; she mechanically took it between her delicate fingers and held it steady while he measured and shortened it by six inches.

"Do you think," she said, between her teeth, "that it is your mission to padlock me to that—in there?"

Lansing turned, following her eyes. She was looking at her husband.

"No," replied Lansing, serenely; "but I shall see that you don't transfer the padlock to—that, out there"—glancing at Coursay on the lawn.

"Try it," she breathed, and let go of the leader, which flew up in silvery crinkles, the cast of brightly colored flies dancing in the sunshine.

"Oh, let him alone," said Lansing, wearily; "all the men in Manhattan are driveling about you. Let him go; he's a sorry trophy—and there's no natural treachery in him. It's not in our blood. It's too cheap for us, and we can't help saying so when we're in our right minds."

There was a little color left in her face when she stood up, her hands resting on the spiked collars of her dogs. "The trouble with you," she said, smiling adorably, "is your innate delicacy."

"I know I am brutal," he said, grimly; "let him alone."

She gave him a pretty salutation, crossed the lawn, passed her husband, who had just ridden up on a powerful sorrel, and called brightly to Coursay: "Take me fishing, Jack, or I'll yawn my head off my shoulders."

Before Lansing could recover his wits, the audacious beauty had stepped into the canoe at the edge of the lawn, and young Coursay, eager and radiant, gave a flourish to his paddle, and drove it into the glittering water.

If Sprowl found anything disturbing to his peace of mind in the proceeding, he did not betray it. He sat hunched up on his big sorrel, eyes fixed on the distant clearing, where the white gable-end of O'Hara's house rose among the trees.

Suddenly he wheeled his mount and galloped off up the river road; the sun glowed on his broad back, and struck fire on his spurs, then horse and rider were gone into the green shadows of the woods.

To play spy was not included in Lansing's duties as he understood them. He gave one disgusted glance after the canoe, shrugged, set fire to the tobacco in his pipe, and started slowly along the river toward O'Hara's with a vague idea of lending counsel, aid, and countenance to his president during the expected interview with Munn.

At the turn of the road he met Major Brent and old Peter, the head keeper. The latter stood polishing the barrels of his shotgun with a red bandanna; the Major was fuming and wagging his head.

"Doctor!" he called out, when Lansing appeared; "Peter says they raised the devil down at O'Hara's last night! This can't go on, d'ye see! No, by Heaven!"

"What were they doing, Peter?" asked Lansing, coming up to where the old man stood.

"Them Shinin' Banders? Waal, sir, they was kinder rigged out in white nightgounds—robes o' Jordan they call 'em—an' they had rubbed some kind o' shiny stuff—like matches—all over these there nightgounds, an' then they sang a spell, an' then they all sot down on the edge o' the river."

"Is that all?" asked Lansing, laughing.

"Wait!" growled the Major.

"Waal," continued old Peter, "the shinin' stuff on them nightgounds was that bright that I seen the fishes swimmin' round kinder dazed like. 'Gosh!' sez I to m'self, it's like a Jack a-drawin' them trout—yaas'r. So I hollers out, 'Here! You Shinin' Band folk, you air a-drawin' the trout. Quit it!' sez I, harsh an' pert-like. Then that there Munn, the Prophet, he up an' hollers, 'Hark how the heathen rage!' he hollers. An' with that, blamed if he didn t sling a big net into the river, an' all them Shinin' Banders ketched holt an' they drawed it clean upstream. 'Quit that!' I hollers, 'it's agin the game laws!' But the Prophet he hollers back, 'Hark how the heathen rage!' Then they drawed that there net out, an' it were full o' trout, big an' little——"

"Great Heavens!" roared the Major, black in the face.

"I think," said Lansing, quietly, "that I'll walk down to O'Hara's and reason with our friend Munn. Sprowl may want a man to help him in this matter."

Sprowl did NOT want any one present at the interview. Why is told you in the conclusion of this very interesting story in the Ledger of December 22, when unexpected revelations explain a good many things you may have found puzzling in this installment.

* * *

Not Taking Much.

"HAVE you taken anything for your complaint?" asked the doctor of a long, lank, hungry-looking man who came to him, complaining of being "all run down," his appearance verifying his words.

"Well, I ain't been taking much of anything, doc—that is, nothing to speak of. I tuk a couple o' bottles o' Pinkham's bitters a while back, an' a bottle of Quackham's invigorator, with a couple o' boxes o' Curem's pills, and a lot o' quinine, and some dandelion tea my old woman made. I've got a mustard plaster on my back, an' a liver pad on, an' I'm wearing an' 'lectric belt, an' takin' cod-liver oil four times a day, with a dose or two of ginger ev'ry other day; 'cepting for that I ain't takin' nothin'."

An Hour Behind Time

By Edgar White

He was only a tramp, but his heart was chivalrous and beauty in distress awakened sentiments he thought had been dead for years.

IT SEEMED like a grim jest to old Grizzley, a hobo for twice ten years, that after all its kicks and cuffs the railroad should take off its hat to him. The thing he had done didn't amount to much. Any farmer boy passing that way could have done it, had he been walking abroad in the night time. While pursuing his ordinary avocation, Grizzley had discovered the wooden supports on trestle 641a north of Starcliff were on fire and that the chances were they would give way under the next train. Looking up the track, he saw a "star" bowling along near the frozen earth, and by that token he knew a train was coming. It happened to be a passenger train, and the men of the cab saw the flare from the burning newspaper that had been wrapped around the last sandwich Grizzley had panhandled from a farmhouse.

The resultant eulogy bored Grizzley. He never was much of a hand-shaker, and he didn't care about all these people gathering around and jerking his flippers up and down. Besides, his right hand was still sore from the amputation of the three main fingers by a coal drag, and it hurt.

They loaded him into a varnished car, and when the wrecker crew got the bridge fixed Grizzley was taken down to Starcliff, where the agent had orders concerning him. Those orders were to give Grizzley a new set of togs from the ground up, a century bill and a ticket to whithersoever he minded to travel.

The thing began to look like practical Christianity to the wanderer. He refused to part with his old duds, and the agent bought him a suitcase for 'em.

The thing that gave Grizzley the largest concern was the parting with the thick grayish mane which rolled down the collar of his tattered coat and made him look like a traveling medicine show doctor in hard luck, and his bushy beard. The agent thought appearances would be improved by letting the barber exercise his judgment, and with a sigh Grizzley told the tonsorial artist to go ahead and see what he could do. The man of the razor left a closely cropped mustache on the upper lip, as Grizzley had specified his face wasn't to be entirely "bald." The transformation would have made a headliner for a movie show. Instead of looking anywhere from 70 to 100 years, the metamorphosed Grizzley might have passed as a law-abiding citizen of middle age, or thereabouts.

"Nobody would give me a handout now," he protested as he surveyed the "mysterious stranger" in the big mirror.

"No, but anybody would give you a job," returned the agent admiringly. "Your best pal would say 'mister' to you now."

Unconvinced as to whether the change would be a business advantage, Grizzley made requisition for a first-class ticket to the city, where he calculated to enjoy the winter on his fortune.

Timid snowflakes were whitening the roofs of the long lines of cars in the division yards as the North End train puffed in an hour late. The engineer said his little dinky machine wouldn't steam against the cold on the outside, that they had loaded him with too many cars and that they ought to have sent up another engine to help him thru the hills. All this to Jim Fitzhugh, the main line engineman, who frowned accusingly at the North End man's excuses, but who did not chide. He was thinking of his own heavy task, with three extra coaches to be added to his already long train, and that hour to the bad to which he had fallen heir—and a snowstorm developing. Fitzhugh, who was a short, sturdily built man, with alert gray eyes, was standing beside the cab trailer of the throbbing machine that was to make the run across the State and into the great city with twelve long cars. The large tender was stacked high with coal. Thru one man's tremendous exertions nearly every pound of it would be swept into the insatiable mouth of the big engine before the day's work was done.

In a handsomely upholstered chair car, far in the rear, reclined Grizzley, the erstwhile tramp. His suitcase was in its proper place in the rack overhead, and his new cap rested snugly on a hook. Grizzley was perusing a copy of a wild West magazine.

For the first time since he could remember he was traveling where the wind and the cold could not get at him, and he was content beyond the power of words.

Beside him was a vacant chair, and he was wishing that Reno Red, or Doc Nunnelley, or old Sacramento were somewheres within hail that he might buy 'em a ticket and let them enjoy the novelty of journeying with him in a varnished car, while they would——

"Beg pardon, would you please place my suitcase in the rack?"

Grizzley, startled from his reverie, straightened up. Standing in the aisle, preparatory to taking the seat beside him, was a girl in a rich fur coat, with a face so white and well molded that it seemed cut from marble, and a pair of the deepest blue eyes he had ever seen. She wore a little violet velvet hat, and from the edges of it billowed light brown hair that shone like gold. Grizzley took her suitcase and placed it safely on the rack above, and swung her light umbrella in the crotches below the rack.

"Thank you, sir," she said as she took off her fur coat and adjusted it on the back of her chair.

The long train started, moving almost without noise, in the falling snow. Grizzley did not speak to his companion, but kept his face toward the window. Had some man taken the seat beside him, he would instantly have started with something, for it was his nature to talk. But a woman—a pretty girl—dropped from the clouds almost against him—what could he say to her that she would understand? And lest his rough speech might scare her away, he resolutely kept his lips closed. The voice with which she thanked him sounded like silver bells he had heard somewhere in his wandering, and then there was something in them like a sob, too. He recalled, in the fleeting moment he had glanced at her, that while her eyes were of the deepest blue, they seemed to have behind them an ocean of unshed tears, and he wondered why——

She was trying to fix her chair so she could recline, but had some trouble in getting it to work right. Grizzley saw the difficulty, ran a hurried eye along the mechanism and found the release clutch. She thanked him again in that gentle voice that reminded him of the mission bells.

"The train is late," she observed quietly.

"Yes, ma'am, an hour late."

"Will they make it up?"

"I don't know, ma'am," replied Grizzley; "it's an awful heavy train—and it's snowing."

A spasm of pain swept across her face, and she raised herself slightly.

"Oh, I do hope they'll make it up," she exclaimed. "I must make connections with the Memphis train!"

Grizzley studied a moment.

"Perhaps if you speak to the conductor," he suggested.

"I will."

Presently the conductor came along to take the tickets, and the girl told him how anxious she was to make connections with the Southern train at the terminal, as she had been called home by the sudden illness of her little brother in the Tennessee town.

"I'll telegraph and see if they won't hold the Memphis train in case we don't make up the time," suggested the conductor.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" exclaimed the girl. "That's good of you!"

The snow fell steadily, covering hills and plains with desolate white.

Two or three towns glided by, and they came to a larger place, where there was a five-minute stop. The conductor here got the answer to the message he had sent further up the road. Grizzley, who followed him out, read:

"Will hold No. 16 ten minutes."

Turning to Grizzley, the conductor said:

"I guess it's the best they can do; even then they're taking big chances in this snow."

"Will we make it?" asked Grizzley.

The conductor shrugged his shoulders and jerked his hand toward the long string of cars. Grizzley understood. He walked forward toward the engine. Among some freight was hidden a man who had been riding the "blind."

"Hello, Reno!" greeted Grizzley.

The man shrank back suspiciously. Grizzley went up to him and gave him the countersign of the fraternity.

"What on earth have you done to yourself, Grizzley?" asked the tramp.

"Got a shave and haircut," replied Grizzley, who was a little excited over the purpose he had in mind; "want to work your way into the city?"

"Yes, but——"

"Come along then; here, take this; it's good money all right; move lively!"

Engineman Fitzhugh was oiling something about the big wheels on his side of the machine when Grizzley and his companion approached.

"Mate," addressed Grizzley, "here's a man who wants to help your fireman get down the coal; his wage is paid."

Fitzhugh turned and frowned. He had been enduring all the anxiety and responsibility of a soldier in the front line trenches, and his nerves were keyed to the snapping point.

"What the devil is it to——"

Grizzley held up his right hand, the hand which was shy three fingers. Fitzhugh suddenly remembered the printed story.

"Are you the man that stopped the Limited Monday night?" he asked.

"Yes, but I'm not asking anything for myself—I got all and more than's coming to me. But there's a little lady in the chair car who wants to catch No. 16 for Memphis—brother's sick, and she's worried a heap. Here's Reno Red, strong man he is—let him help your fireman into the city—you know how it is—she's—she's little and it hurts—they'll hold No. 16 ten minutes for you—do you reckon——"

Fitzhugh nodded.

"Tell your man to hop in the cab there," he added. "Maybe the three of us——"

The conductor signaled, Fitzhugh pulled his long slender lever back and the six big drivers bit into the rails. Slowly and without slipping the start was made, but by the time the last open vestibule passed where Grizzley was waiting only an expert could have swung aboard with whole bones.

"The conductor says they will only hold the Memphis train ten minutes, and he isn't sure we can make it," informed the girl helplessly as Grizzley returned to the seat beside her.

"The gentleman ahead has more help and will do his level best," returned Grizzley. "See how fast we are going?" waving his arm toward the flying landscape.

"Did you speak to the engineer," she asked with a sudden light in her blue eyes.

"I—he was talking to some men when I happened by," evaded Reno Red's pal.

She looked at him thoughtfully, and tho she could not guess what it was she intuitively understood this strange man had done something for her. And then she told him all about herself, of her journey up the country, of the time she had at their Christmas frolics, and how good the people had all been to her and what a beautiful visit she had been having until——

The lips trembled and the blue eyes filled with tears.

As she talked Grizzley stole side glances at her from time to time, and what he saw of the beautiful eyes, the white patrician face and tender lips, and with the cadence of the gentle voice, a picture came out of the shadowy past, when he was a young, ambitious man, living in a thriving town beyond the eastern mountains, where there was a girl with the same bright brown hair, the same white, exquisitely moulded features and the same blue eyes, only those eyes across the mountains always sparkled with laughter, and never were wet with tears. Madeline her name was, and he and she walked hand-in-hand thru the garden of youth's first love until a man from the great city came along and told her she was born for better things, and took her away with him, and he never saw her again. He tried hard to make good at his job and forget, but he seemed to be continually committing ridiculous blunders; customers found fault and the boss hinted a change of atmosphere might help and he—Oh, well, that was long ago and what's the use——

But she did look wonderfully like Madeline, and he tortured his soul by thinking she would suddenly smile mockingly at him and vanish, or that some one would come in the car and take her away from him. The long sleeping current had aroused within his breast and he trembled at the intensity of the passion that was mastering him. Twenty years it had been since he and anything like love for womankind had shaken hands and parted, and his reasoning told him that now it had only come again in the shape of a haunting vision, to leave him more wretched than before. Of course some one would claim her when the big city was reached, some tall, fine-looking stripling, who would meet her at the car steps, take her suitcases and lead her away, and she would never once think of her chance fellow-passenger on the car. Grizzley wished he had taken the "blind," or was in front with Reno Red pulling down coal, anywhere but so close to a heaven that would make his fall like the tearing out of his eyes.

As the wintry day shaded into a canopy of lead, she dozed, and Grizzley signaled the porter to bring a pillow, which he deftly placed under her head without awakening her.

"Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal."

Some young folks who had been attending a Sunday-school convention upstate were singing one of the songs used at their meeting. At the melody Grizzley's companion opened her eyes, and, detecting the pillow under her head, she smiled and held out her hand to him, and when his touched hers she did not let go.

"As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild——"

Fierce red sparks flickered by in the dusk, while others rattled like hailstones against the ventilators.

The broad searchlight ahead of No. 2708 revealed countless diamonds falling from the sky. Reno Red and the fireman toiled at the rapidly lessening mountain of coal, keeping a steady stream flowing into the white-hot furnace. Engineman Fitzhugh, with pale and furrowed face, looked steadily ahead at the two silvery strands that formed the trail over which the Limited was rushing. A steady stream of fire played out of the short stack abaft the electric headlight. Above the cab the safety valve snapped viciously.

Twinkling in the distance, thru the hills, were many stars—the arc lights of a town. About the hills the road curved and writhed, but No. 2708 took every sinuosity of the roadbed with unslackened rein. Road-warning posts, tall and ghastly, brought sharp, quick snarls from the bronze throat of the big

LOVE'S BUBBLE

THE GIRL:
"The man I wed,"
The maiden said,
"Must be a shapely prince;
I must not draw
A suit at law
By picking up a quince.
His eyes must be
Alone for me—
In general, I'd say
He must be far
Ahead of par
In every single way!"

That's what the simple maiden said
When asked what sort of man she'd wed.

THE MAN:
"The girl for me
To wed," said he,
"Must be a fancy cook;
She'll cook the fish
And wash the dish,
If I must bait the hook.
If I must toil,
She'll fry or broil
When I bring beefsteak home;
And she must stay
At home, nor stray—
I don't like wives who roam."

That's what the fellow said with vim,
Descriptive of the girl for him.

YEA BO!

What weary fools these mortals be,
What dreams they dream, my brother!
He missed his wish, and so did she,
By marrying each other!

—Stewart Edward Warner.

machine that was leaping thru the night like a mad stallion unleashed.

The Limited had reached out into the great uncharted universe, and turned back the hands of time one hour!

"Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
Jesus—Savior—pilot me!"

Hand in hand the two travelers sat, the man of the road and the girl who was hastening home, their heads close together, listening to the song of the young people, understanding each other but saying nothing. The chandeliers tinkled as the car lurched from side to side in rounding the curves of the hill country, the sparks flew by fiercer and larger and the "hailstones" battered the ventilators like volleys from machine guns.

"They are running very fast," she murmured contentedly. "I believe we will be in on time."

"They got an engine most as big as a battleship," comforted Grizzley, "and if they give it plenty of coal nothing can stop it."

There was a long sonorous herald for the approaching town on the river and the great steel bridge in the Limited's path. No. 2708, all a-quiver with flame and steam, swept out on the high fill with a roar like that of a mighty projectile; tore thru the outskirts of the town as a cyclone, as an avalanche from the crest of a thousand-foot hill, as a charge of cavalry across a frozen plain, and then there was a crash like the meeting of two worlds.

The race was over.

The men who dug him out of the wreck said that he had been pinned from the hips down, but that he could move his arms and the upper part of his body, and that for five hours he had reached for snow to keep down the flames on the burning timber so they would not reach a girl who was likewise held by a timber, but not so heavily as he, because his body was the larger, and had stood the brunt of the mass. When he had gathered up all the snow he could reach, they said he fought the flames with his bare hands until they were all covered with blood and burns.

They placed him in one of the cottages near the track. Along in the afternoon some people entered the room and found a girl with blue eyes and light brown hair kneeling by his bed. Some one, perhaps not intending to be irreverent, told her that the man was Grizzley, a notorious wanderer, the companion of Reno Red and that sinister ilk.

"I don't care," said the girl, as she arose and faced them, with an air of gentle pride, "before he died he reached out his arms to me, and I kissed him." Then she dropped her voice to a whisper: "He called me Madeline—it was mother's name."

The Twelve Coins of Confucius

By Harry Stephen Keeler

What Happened Up to This Time

JASON BARTON, reporter on the Chicago Evening Dispatch, is called into the office of Braithwaite, city editor, and given the well-nigh impossible task of getting an interview with the Princess O. Lyra Seng, daughter of the Emperor of China, or lose his job. (The events are supposed to occur in the year 1918.) The young Princess is in Chicago, and is making a world tour with the prime minister, Li Hwei Tsung, and his wife. So far the Princess has given an interview to no one. Goaded by Braithwaite's taunts and insolence, the young man vows he will succeed in getting the interview. Just as he is leaving, the city editor adds another assignment—looking into the case of a Chinese laundryman who had been stabbed to death, apparently in a tong war. Barton stops on his way to see Charles Fawcett, an old friend and brilliant newspaper man who has let liquor get the best of him. Getting the other's promise to reform, make himself presentable and look for a position, Barton lends him some money and goes on to Sam Toy's laundry. The policeman on duty, after giving him the details known, leaves him in charge while he goes for some cigars. Having learned that the Chinaman apparently did not die immediately, but was found with a paintbrush in hand, as if trying to write a message, Barton finds a laundry ticket with strange characters in the ledge of the transom, where it has evidently blown when the door has been opened. This he takes to the University of Chicago to have it deciphered by Professor Chan Fu, but learning that that worthy will not return until afternoon, he writes him a note, inclosing half of the ticket with the strange characters. The other half he retains. Hastening to the Hotel Rydenour, where the Princess is stopping, he is told she will see no visitors and also hears that for the moment she is unguarded by the prime minister and his wife. Ascertaining that her suite is on the fourteenth floor, Barton takes the elevator to the fifteenth, and, by using the fire-escape to clamber down, soon finds himself in the corridor of the Princess' suite. Hearing feminine voices behind a closed door, he knocks firmly three times.

You now have a synopsis of what has gone before and can go on with the story from here. In case you want the previous chapters in full, the story was begun in No. 49, December 8. Back copies may be obtained from news dealers, our agents or by mail direct from the office of publication.

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CHAPTER V.

AT THE THIRD KNOCK.

AT BARTON'S knock the voices stopped suddenly and a profound silence followed. A second later the door swung open a bare crack, revealing an obviously elderly Chinese woman in quaint Chinese costume. Even before she had a chance to open her mouth Barton spoke rapidly:

"Madam, Jason H. Barton is my name. I represent the American press—the Chicago Evening Dispatch. The American people are more than anxious to——"

"No unlestan'," she said helplessly. She started to close the door in his face, but the movement seemed to be interrupted by a sudden command in unintelligible words. The maid, for such it must have been, looked back in indecision as tho ordered not to close out the visitor. Then she swung the door wide open. And Barton, his heart beating rather wildly, stepped inside.

He found himself in the usual stuffy hotel parlor, furnished with red plush furniture of undoubted expensiveness, yet chilling from its very absence of any homelike aspect. And standing in the center of the floor, her back turned to a great pier glass, was a Chinese girl.

She was slender—as slender as any American girl. Barton's keen appraising eye took in the jet-black hair, done on her head with a rose, exactly after a Harrison Fisher girl on a magazine cover which was pinned to the edge of the pier glass; and he could not but smile at the suggestion it gave of femininity being the same the world over. She was clad, however, in a most ornate Chinese costume—the pantaloons and blouse of which were covered with tapestry threads of gold and silver and multi-colored silk, with here and there a bit of carved jade hanging pendant. Her little feet were incased in slippers of gold thread, but they were not deformed, Barton noted at once, for the two steps that she took toward him were the steps of normal feet. The neck of the rich Chinese garment was cut low, revealing a soft, girlish throat that was in keeping with the slim, rounded form that might have done justice to any of her white sisters. Her cheek bones were a trifle high, revealing the Celestial blood in her, but her complexion, soft and smooth, was a remarkable combination of cream and pink, with the pink blending at the mouth into a pair of the rosiest red lips. Long black eyelashes shaded the most alluring of violet-brown, almond-shaped eyes. And as Barton stepped forward uneasily, he could detect about her a sensuous, exotic perfume. For a second it seemed to him somehow that he was gazing upon a transplanted bud from a clime of sun and flowers.

"You—you are newspaper man?" she asked curiously, even timidly.

Barton bowed low and held out to her one of his cards. "Jason H. Barton is my name, Princess. I am with the Dispatch of this city."

The Princess studied the card closely, then looked up smilingly. "I think I like talk to one of you newspaper men, Mr. Jason H. Barton. Everywhere I go I am cooped up and never get a chance to see or talk or live while I in this country. I speak English, you see. I educated in English in China, and I study much about it. Won't—won't you sit down?"

Rather bewildered, Barton sat down in the nearest chair, studying the girl across from him. The elderly Chinese woman had already closed the door and slipped over in one corner, where she sat like a graven image. Barton suddenly spoke:

"Princess O Lyra, your guardian, Mr. Tsung, has given to the press a statement that you would furnish no interviews while in this country. But this country is terribly interested in people of importance from other lands—and also in what they think of this great America. I should be highly honored if you would talk to me for a few short minutes upon subjects which I might write up and print in my paper. Is—is this asking too much?"

She pouted a delightful little pout. She dropped into one of the unfriendly plush chairs near her. "Honorable Tsung," she said slowly, "does not want me to see American press. His words did not come from I. He thinks interviews not thing. Perhaps, tho, that is command from my honorable father. I do not know. Yet I like talk to you. And if you not stop me, I tell you all I think and know. I am girl, you see." And she smiled sweetly at her feminine joke.

Barton laughed from sheer glee as much as from the joke. He could scarcely realize yet that matters had turned out as they had. He had fully expected to be ordered out long since—yet here he was, sitting in the room with the only daughter of the Emperor of China. He reached into his pocket and drew forth his notebook and pencil. He paused undecidedly for a moment and then asked the old, old question that has been asked of every visiting dignitary who has ever crossed the city limits of Chicago.

"Princess, what did you think of our stockyards?"

She shivered a little. "I not like them. I cover my eyes with my hands when our carriage go by them." Suddenly she gave a delightful little giggle. "But the piggies—the cute little piggies!" Barton looked up startled from his notebook. "They are just same piggies I have seen thousands of time on roads out from Peking when I ride with my teachers. The same funny little fat stomachs, and same funny little curly tails. For once in my life, Mr. Jason H. Barton, I get what you call it—homesick!" Her face grew puzzled. "Why is it, Mr. Jason H. Barton, that while there are different races on face of earth—the piggies are just the same piggies the world over?"

He was rather busy with his pencil, taking down her quaint answer, but he looked up. "I'm sure I don't know," he replied, smiling openly. "Rather a silly little girl," was his inward comment, "in spite of the fact that she's an Emperor's daughter." He paused a moment. It suddenly struck him that Tsung might come back at any moment and a sudden uneasiness seized him. So he drove straight to his interview.

"Princess O Lyra," he asked, "what is your opinion as to the value to China of monarchy against republic?"

"Oh, I am very radical little girl," she replied promptly. "I read and study too much in China. I think, Mr. Jason H. Barton, that there must a day come when every country is republic. I not in favor of monarchy anywhere." She made a sweeping gesture with her slender hand. "But my people—420,000,000 of them—are still for most part in ignorance and superstition. Everything they do is controlled by good and bad 'feng-shui,' or what you might call—might call—'aspects.' Until they can be educate away from that, I not believe they can rule themselves. It is feng-shui that has kept in China wooden railroads and wooden plows for all these years."

"But this condition," queried Barton, poising his pencil above the notebook and studying the delicate, dark, almond eyes of the girl wonderingly, finding she was a little deeper than he thought she was; "is it not due to their religion of Buddhism?"

"No, no, no!" she cried emphatically. "State religion of China is Confucianism—not Buddhism. We have some Buddhism—some Taoism—some Mohammedanism—but Confucianism is religion that permeates the bigger part of my people."

This set Barton on a new productive tack. "Then what are your opinions, Princess, on religion in general? They would be of great value to my interview."

"Oh, I have thought much—much about that subject. Confucianism is not barbaric religion you may think it is. You—most of you—do not really know China. Confucianism is—is—highly ethical system of conduct. It is almost identical with Ten Commandments of Christianity. Its very keywords, Mr. Jason H. Barton, are Benevolence, Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom and Generosity. It defines the relations between prince and minister, husband and wife, father and son, brother and brother, and friend and friend. It is highly-spiritual—almost as much as so your Christianity. I think all time that, after all, Confucianism and Christianity are nearly identical at heart. I have study about your Christ. And His universal brotherhood is magnificent; His words, 'Do unto others' are greatest wisdom world will ever know. They would—they could—solve whole problem of racial strife. I, only Chinese girl, cannot exactly understand that the man Christ is—what you call it—divine. Yet, like Renan, I believe His extreme sacrifice and His remarkable al—al—altruistic doctrines, even tho He were only ordinary man, did make Him divine—after His death. You see, Mr. Jason H. Barton it all rests upon my inter—interpretation of divinity."

Barton heard her thru amazed, not forgetting, however, to transfer every one of her words to his notebook. Open-mouthed, he looked toward her. "Good-Heavens, Princess, do you mean to tell me that you, a Chinese girl, have read Renan?"

She smiled delightfully at the wonder on his face. "Oh, Mr. Jason H. Barton, I what you call bookworm. I not speak English or read English near so good like I do German and French. I read Renan in French—and I very interested."

"But, Princess," he ejaculated, almost forgetting on account of her charming naivete that he was talking to an Emperor's daughter, "how do you get an opportunity to read such deep things—with court functions to attend?"

"But I am only girl," she replied quietly, "I have teachers to teach me—but no court functions. I practically cooped up in palace at Peking with nothing to do—but read—read—read. I almost like Turkish women like I see when honorable Tsung and we all of us pass thru Turkey. They live in—in—cocoon of their own spinning. And I make for me a cocoon of my thoughts—on things and the world."

He listened carefully. "Princess, you surprise me. I did not expect, when I first began, to find our interview going into such channels as it has. Indeed, you are quite a student." He paused. "Then may I ask in all politeness what your opinion is of one of the greatest questions in the life of the world—the race question? How do you think it will ever be solved?"

"Of that, too, have I thought much," she returned fervently. "Yes, the race question will be solved. It will not be ten years—nor hundred—nor thousand. It will be solved in but one way—not by science, by social laws, by partition, by world government, by universal disarmament, nor by international policing. Yes, Mr. Jason H. Barton, the race question, if solar system not destroyed thru some ca—ca—cataclysm, will be solved one day thru one process only."

"And the solution?" he asked eagerly, forgetting for a second even to wield his pencil. "What is your solution, Princess, of the race question—the biggest question in the history of civilization?"

CHAPTER VI.

A FLOWER UNFOLDS.

THE Princess O Lyra Seng dropped her eyes to the floor for one brief second. Then she raised them and faced the reporter bravely, a barely perceptible flush mounting to her cheeks.

"My solution is a radical one—but only one," she said simply. "And I think, Mr. Jason H. Barton, that you will agree with me. What is race? It is not color—altho color is always one of visible characteristics. As to color—pigmentation—science will overcome that in less than few hundred years. Science will make us all of one shade. But race is something deeper—far deeper—than mere color. Racial distinctions date back thousands of years; they are rooted too deep to be outweeded by professors working in laboratories. And my solution is so—so simple. It is intermarriage! Intermarriage must take place between all races of earth until so-called racial distinctions are breeded out. Then, when in a thousand or five thousand years a great homo—homo—oh, dear, what is that terrible word in English—homogeneous race shall people the earth, then shall there no longer be any race but human race. Then shall there be no race hatred—no war. You see, Mr. Jason H. Barton, so long as the desire for war may remain in hearts of men, even tho war itself is made impossible, then humanity is not yet even on road to reach its—its wonderful capabilities. Race antagonism must go, you see. Hence race and pride of race must disappear!"

He studied her for a long time before he spoke. "Princess, you are what we know in this country as an idealist. You have stated a daring theory which would be scoffed at if broached in this present year. You astound me by the very depth of your thoughts. Yet I believe you have stated the problem and its solution." He paused. "May I ask, therefore, what are your views on love? One out of every two readers of the American newspaper is the American woman. She, Princess O Lyra Seng, will be greatly disappointed unless she learns the opinions on love held by one of her own sex—from far across the seas."

The Princess smiled sweetly in his direction, and stared dreamily off into space. The maid still remained like a graven image of, perhaps, a female Buddha, never moving, never blinking an eye.

"Love!" said O Lyra Seng, softly. "And if I speak on that, then will you say still more that O Lyra Seng is idealist. Love, Mr. Jason H. Barton, is a real, such a real thing in life. It is the biggest thing. I think I know what love should be—altho it has never been satisfactorily defined. Plato try to define it—and come near it. He merely say it is attraction of opposites. But he not analyze it deeply, so like I. Love, I believe, is perception by a personality of its complementary personality. But personality—what is that? Is it not nothing but a great intricate bundle of simple characteristics in which one characteristic is complexion, another stature, another build, another physical energy, another physical courage, another mental courage; and so on thru the diverse human attributes such as generosity, sta—stá—stamina, depth of thought, foresight, quickness of thought, idealism of thought, practicalness, and thousands of others, mental, spiritual and physical?"

She paused, then went on breathlessly: "In marriage—that free-choice sort which you Americans may enjoy, you do not always study and analyze the other's personality—hence you do not always secure your complementary personality. In China, do we not even have any choice in the matter. Yet I believe in this heart of mine that in the whole, great, wide world is there but one personality that exactly supplies the opposite characteristics to our own personality. If we can find that—then have we love. If we marry that—then do we have real marriage, incidentally physical—but really the marriage of the soul. It is mutual understanding, mutual supplying of the opposite characteristics, mutual appreciation of human qualities in each other, Mr. Jason H. Barton, that makes this thing called love." The Princess paused again, quite carried away by her convictions. "And —and will that satisfy the American woman, Mr. Jason H. Barton?"

"That is a splendid, wonderful answer," he returned, raising his pencil from his pothook-strewn notebook. "You are indeed an idealist—a thinker—a poet. Please do not be angry when I make this remark; but I want to say to you that you should not have been the daughter of the Emperor of China. For your personality—your own unique personality—cannot find its complementary personality on account of your rank."

Her face grew sad. "Yes, I fear you have stated the tragedy, Mr. Jason H. Barton, in life of O Lyra Seng."

He changed the subject hastily, going back again to the race question. "It is said," he ventured, "that intermarriage between opposite races produces deterioration. I do not know this. I have only heard it from those not really qualified to discuss it. I——"

"Oh, it is not so," she broke in hurriedly "You must not tear to pieces O Lyra Seng's theory. That is only superstition like our feng-shui—and just as bad. When first I began to think on this question, I heard of man Mendel who know all about heredity. And oh, how hard I tried to find this man Mendel's works! But his works were not in China. Finally I cry so much that my honorable father offer to give me three coolies and little palace and pond of goldfish for my birthday. But I cry and I want only Mendel. So he have consultation and he send way—way—to Germany for Mendel and finally it arrive—a splendid big book. It is in German. It says that Mendel long since dead, but it tell of the men who make of his studies the science of eugenics. I have to read slowly, and I find that your superstition not founded on fact. Mendel show many wonderful experiments with bean vines and sweet-peas. For two long years I try them out myself in my garden—and I repeat them all. And I learn then that regardless of race, the result of the intercrossing of species is to produce descendants only according to certain laws concerning dominant and recessive characteristics. When this is done, why may not eugenics be as effective in breeding across the races as well as in one race? Why not make problem of life the perpetuation of good characteristics in the offspring and the removal of bad, rather than the perpetuation of mere race, Mr. Jason H. Barton?"

At her last speech, Barton was more than amazed. "Studied and worked out the Mendelian theory of heredity with plants!" he ejaculated. "Heavens, if I could find an American girl with the personality of this Celestial flower, what wouldn't I give for her?" Lost for a moment, he regarded her in growing admiration, his eyes roving across her pink-tinged cheeks to the slanting eyes of dark velvet. Suddenly he collected himself and spoke—once more on business.

"What do you think of our hustle and bustle, Princess?"

"I adore it," she returned quickly. "It is spirit of unrest, and unrest is creativeness. It is portrayal of—of—of smashing force, so unlike placidity of our country." She clasped her hands together. "Oh, I like it so, Mr. Jason H. Barton. I long—I wish that I could be of this life—to act—to do—to think—to vote—to be one spoke in this great machine of existence." Her face grew sad again. "Yet must O Lyra Seng enact the fate of her life. Just a girl of twenty—and she must follow road laid out for her."

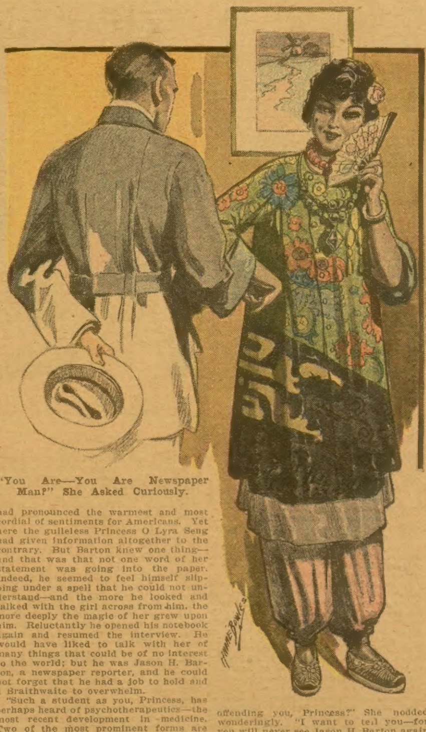
Again Barton changed the subject. "You are quite happy under Mr. Li Hwei Tsung's guardianship, are you, Princess?"

She looked at him curiously. Then she shook her head slowly. "I not like honorable Tsung. And——" She studied him closely. "Mr. Jason H. Barton, I am girl who trust everybody. Perhaps that why they don't let me see reporters. Yet I know by your eyes you are man to be trusted. If—if I make statement to you, you will promise not to put in your paper?"

He shut his notebook with a sharp snap and leaned forward. "Absolutely."

"Honorable Tsung," she said, "is not in heart like I. He hate America and Americans—he hate them bitterly. And I talk to him so much trying to get him to think different. But for reasons far, far back—reasons I know not—he not like Americans at all."

Barton restrained himself with difficulty from letting loose a whistle of astonishment. He recalled Li Hwei Tsung's sugared address to reporters at New York wherein the Chinese dignitary had pronounced the warmest and most cordial of sentiments for Americans. Yet here the guileless Princess O Lyra Seng had given information altogether to the contrary. But Barton knew one thing—and that was that not one word of her statement was going into the paper. Indeed, he seemed to feel himself slipping under a spell that he could not understand—and the more he looked and talked with the girl across from him, the more deeply the magic of her grew upon him. Reluctantly he opened his notebook again and resumed the interview. He would have liked to talk with her of many things that could be of no interest to the world; but he was Jason H. Barton, a newspaper reporter, and he could not forget that he had a job to hold and a Braithwaite to overwhelm.



"You Are—You Are Newspaper Man?" She Asked Curiously.

"Such a student as you, Princess, has perhaps heard of psychotherapeutics—the most recent development in medicine. Two of the most prominent forms are Christian Science and Mental Healing. Do you account for the cures in any way?"

"Of them all I have read," she returned, her eyes brightening enthusiastically. "The Christian Science book I perused six times, trying to understand it. But it is very hard for Chinese girl, you know. This terrible English language! But, while I do not yet fully grasp it, I think your Mary Baker Eddy and your Mental Healers and your psychotherapists, whether right or wrong, have uncovered great germic principle underlying all nature—that mind is more powerful than anything else in universe. I have vision of something back of it all—that what we want to be, we are. Does not the mind in its dreams assume the identities and the triumphs it wish to enjoy? In German I read Kraft-Ebing and also Freud—and I perceive then something that no one yet perceive—that the various phases of psychotherapy and the action of subconscious mind according to Freudian theories, are all connect by something—not apparently grasped by any one. And so——" She stopped. "Mr. Jason H. Barton, I afraid I talk too much to you. I never get chance to talk of these things—of the things I feel and think. And it will be read by every one in Chicago?" she asked, awestricken.

He set aside his notebook. "By every one in Chicago?" he echoed enthusiastically. "Why, Princess, this interview will be syndicated—it will be published in a paper in every city in the United States of America. It will be devoured by every man, woman and child. A new conception will rattle across the ocean about the daughter of the new Emperor of China. An ordinary interview would never have gone farther than Chicago; but this splendid exposition of yourself—why, it will be read by forty million people. It's a world-beater. Princess, you have made life very pleasant for one poor reporter."

CHAPTER VII.

STARTLING INFORMATION.

BARTON paused. A silence fell between him and the Princess O Lyra Seng. Finally he spoke again:

"And may I make a statement without offending you, Princess?" She nodded wonderingly. "I want to tell you—for you will never see Jason H. Barton again —that you are a very wonderful girl; that there are few such as you in the world. In you mingle femininity, beauty, youth, personality and insight into life and its grave questions. Princess, the man who gets you will be a very fortunate man. This is the verdict of the poor Chicago newspaper reporter who interviewed you!"

Her face was the picture of amazement. "And, Mr. Jason H. Barton, you think I am wonderful girl?" Her tone betrayed the utter incredulity in her.

"Indeed, yes," he said fervently.

She clasped her hands closer together. "And to me that is wonderful. All my life, Mr. Jason H. Barton, have I wanted to meet some one who did think I was wonderful—who could see me down to my soul. No one has ever said that to me before. Oh, but you cannot dream how I have wanted to be understood. Even my honorable father does not know his O Lyra Seng. And you really think that, Mr. Jason H. Barton? That —that—is wonderful to me. Somebody—somebody at last understands O Lyra Seng." She paused. "I feel like I like to talk more to you—again to you. I think—I think I see way down in you, Mr. Jason H. Barton, that thing called personality; but you so anxious to put me down on paper that you all business and not Jason H. Barton at all."

A sudden daring idea shot into Barton's brain like a bolt from a clear sky. Over in the corner he saw a telephone. He quickly wrote a word and a number on the bottom of one of his notebook pages and tore it off. Then he leaned forward and handed it to the Princess.

"Princess, if in the next few days you feel that you would like to see Jason H. Barton again, and the honorable Tsung is not here, just raise that receiver over there, ask for this magic number in English, and ten seconds later you will be talking to me—or else to some one who can give you another magic number in place of it. And I'll be here. I'll——" He stopped short, in trepidation at his own boldness.

She seized the fragment of paper and tucked it in a quaint blue-silk pocket of her Chinese costume. "I so lonely, Mr. Jason H. Barton, that minute honorable Tsung go—then I likely to do as you say. I like much to talk to those who understand me—but nobody ever quite understand O Lyra Seng yet. I am so young. I live always in hope that man who marry me in China will understand me. I long to be of life, to do, to see, to think, to read, to act—yet I so unlucky as to be princess of royal blood, only daughter of my honorable father."

Barton glanced uneasily at his watch. It came suddenly to him with disturbing force that if Li Hwei Tsung should return during his visit, it might lead to unfortunate—even embarrassing—complications. So he hurriedly opened his notebook to a blank page, and uncorked the end of his fountain pen.

"Princess, will you sign this interview? Your signature, thru what is known as a zinc cut, will be reproduced under your words, and you may feel sure that those words will be only those which you have given me. And, if you will, I should like you to sign further down again, so that I may keep your signature as a perpetual remembrance of a mighty pleasant meeting." He held it out to her.

Daintily she took the notebook and with the fountain pen signed in great childish handwriting: O Lyra Seng, Daughter of Seng Hoang-Ti of China. Beneath it she deftly made two intricate Chinese characters. Then, lower down on the same page, she duplicated the whole thing. '"There," she said to him smiling, as she handed it back to him, "I have made signature both in Chinese and American handwriting."

"You were telling me, Princess," Barton resumed, now that he had the most essential thing of the interview, "that you hoped to find in China some one who will understand you. But will you meet enough people in royal circles to give you any degree of choice in marriage?"

"Well, there was once man," she explained, her face clouding up, "oh, so much older as I, who say he love me. He was educated man; I know that, for he talk much with me. Then was I 16—and my honorable grandfather was on China's throne, just before China try being republic and fail. This man make serious mistake of going to my honorable grandfather with request for to marry me—and my honorable grandfather have him flogged. That make me very unhappy. And both my honorable father and honorable grandfather suffer for that, for this man Chu Li Yuan fled China with the Twelve Golden Coins of Confucius—and the work of centuries, of thousands of men, and millions of taels of silver was lost. And poor little O Lyra Seng the innocent cause of it all."

"The Twelve Golden Coins of Confucius!" murmured Barton, interested. "I'm afraid I don't quite understand."

"I forgot," she said simply, "that you are not of China. You see," she explained, "when the all-wise Confucius die in what in your calendar was year 478 B. C., he call to his bedside thirteen of his lifelong friends. To each of them did he give a golden coin hammered out by himself on his own anvil. He tell them, as he lay dying, that the owners of those coins shall enjoy good luck, health and prosperity to the thousandth generation—and that when those thirteen coins shall come again together in one ownership, shall China reach the highest state of which she is capable—in ethics, military prowess, civilization and wealth. Those golden coins were handed down secretly from generation to generation; but two hundred years later an Emperor of the Wun dynasty constructed great spy system to ferret them out and bring them together into the coffers of the Emperor."

"And why was that?" Barton asked.

"Oh, they were so blind," the girl declared earnestly. "The rulers could not see—they cannot today—that Confucius meant it all figuratively; that if the owner of a coin believe it were able to bring luck and happiness, then the mental believe would bring that luck and happiness; that when individual superstition and individual greed had so far disappeared from mankind that the coins would be voluntarily given up to communistic ownership, then had mankind reached its highest state." She paused. "And so, during last twenty-one hundred years have thousands of spies been going thru China trying to find who own the coins of Confucius' original thirteen; millions of taels of silver have been spent in finding them. And one by one they have been located—their owners have been dragged into Emperor's court and forced under penalty of beheadment to give them up so that original thirteen might be brought together. After twenty-one hundred years twelve had been recovered. These were kept in great room in royal palace. And Chu Li Yuan was the keeper. It was one of highest honors in the Empire. But when my honorable grandfather have him flogged, he flee in the night; and next day most valuable thing in China's history was missing. Somewhere—perhaps between Peking and the sea; perhaps in the mountains—did he bury them in his flight; but neither he nor they were ever seen since."

"Great Scott, Princess," commented Barton, "but that was some terrible revenge for a flogging—to undo the work of thousands of years." He paused and added jocularly: "Wouldn't it have been better if you had added your entreaties to the request of this royal Chinaman, married him, and helped to keep these coins which were priceless to the Emperor and the Empire?"

"But I not exactly like him," she said, with a little uneasy laugh. "I feel queer little shivers when I talk to him and look at the funny little patch of albino hair in his queue and the funny little scar on his nose. He make——"

She stopped, her eyes opening in surprise. Barton had stiffened up in his chair; there was a roaring in his ears and he felt a sudden dizziness of astonishment. He was thinking of the odd patch of white hair in the queue of Sam Toy, the dead laundryman—and the equally odd little scar across the latter's nose!

Perhaps you, too, want to know the connection between the murdered laundryman and the Princess of China and what the strange characters on the piece of paper which Barton found in the dead man's room meant. There will be a new twist to this story in next week's Ledger.

* * *

What to Give.

"What can I give Uncle Jake for a Christmas present?" said young Robinson Ramble.

"Well," answered Mrs. Ramble, thoughtfully, "you might give him a handkerchief."

"No," interrupted the elder Ramble. "I'm going to give him a handkerchief myself. It wouldn't do for the whole family to give handkerchiefs to the same man. He would think we were a very stupid family. Come to think of it, I don't care much for handkerchiefs as Christmas presents anyway. Everybody gives handkerchiefs."

"Well, I'm for 'em!" said young Ramble. "Supposing every one reasoned as you do, and supposing that everybody assumed that everybody else was going to give handkerchiefs and so didn't give any. Things would be in a nice mess. Everybody figures on pulling down a few handkerchiefs at Christmas and so they don't buy any for themselves. But if everybody decides to be original and depart from the standard present there is going to be a great dearth of a very useful article."

"Calendars are good," suggested Mrs. Ramble.

"Admirable," enthused young Ramble. "The calendar is the one present that a person can't hold over for a year or two and then give to somebody else. I'll send calendars to all my friends."

"No," decreed Ramble, Sr. "You don't need to send calendars. You only give about four presents and it ought to be easy for you to figure them out. But with me it's different. I have to give fifty-seven, and I'm going in for calendars myself, so you lay off. We don't want people to think that the Ramble family can't think of anything but calendars."

"Oh, very well," replied young Ramble. "Calendars aren't so very much anyway. There is never a story to go with 'em, and I like a Christmas present with a story to it. Christmas presents with stories with them are great conversation makers. You put one of them on the mantel where people can't get away from it and when they begin to admire it the story comes.

"'Yes, my little thingumbob sent me that. When she was visiting me last summer I remarked so-and-so, and she never said anything more about it at the time, and then when Christmas came here was this what-you-may-call-it, and I remembered our conversation——' And then if nothing stirs by way of enthusiastic interest the converser can add, 'I thought it real cute of her because——' and add a few more yards and keep it up until the listener makes some response or dinner is served. Mother, can't you think me up some sort of a present for me with a story to it?"

"No," interposed Ramble, Sr. "Mother can't. She has my fifty-seven to think up first."

* * *

Defined.

"What is the poetry of motion?"

"The kind that is always going from one editor to another."

The Shrewberry Shrubbery

By Will Gage Carey

ARE you reading this series of humorous stories? If not, you are missing something good. They are exceedingly funny and each story is complete in itself.

THE stillness and drowsy hush of a sultry summer's day had gathered over Dawson's Dells. The tranquil stretch of street seemed desolate and deserted, the nearest semblance to movement being the spasmodic and not wholly successful efforts of a mangy dog reclining in the shade of the grocery store to reach with his teeth a certain tantalizing portion of his anatomy running parallel and contiguous to his spinal column. Finally, as tho concluding that such effort was silly and superfluous on a day so sultry, the dog desisted, passively and absolutely; and the scene—including the group of citizens upon the bench in front of the store—resembled one painted upon canvas.

Presently a strange apparition came around the corner—an elderly individual, tall, thin, clean-shaven, and imbued with a certain dignity of bearing, despite an atmosphere of utter gloom and sadness which seemed to permeate his entire being. He wore a high hat, a black suit which included a long swallow-tail coat, patent leather shoes and white spats. Upon his right shoulder was perched a spirited, keen-eyed, cocky bird of brilliant plumage—a blue jay; and neither the elderly person nor the bird itself appeared to regard their association in the slightest degree unusual or out of the ordinary. As he passed the group on the bench he saluted them with a graveness of manner little short of actual mournfulness, then passed on his way, absorbed in thoughts from which even the noisy twittering of the jay could not arouse him.

Stirred by this passing apparition, one of the group upon the bench—Baron Dome—straightened up and put forth the query in a general way:

"Who, please tell me, is the gloomy one, and why does he carry a blue jay upon his shoulder?"

Considering that the Baron might still be regarded almost as a stranger within our gates, his query was by no means an unnatural one. Speckled Boner, our assistant depot master, answered him: "The man which you seen is one of the faculty of the knowledge foundry up on the hill yonder—Professor Shrewberry, the ornithologist."

"No!"

"It sure is; and he carries that cockeyed blue jay around with him because he looks upon it as a true and loyal associate—in fact, the only thing alive in the world he can wholly trust. Get me?"

The Baron stroked his chin dubiously.

"Not fully," he answered, at length. "Do you mean to imply that this venerable person who just passed has come in recent contact with grief and trouble——"

"With a woman—same thing!"

The Baron took up an immediate defense of the fair sex.

"Mr. Boner," he observed, impressively, "you cannot call every woman an adventuress——"

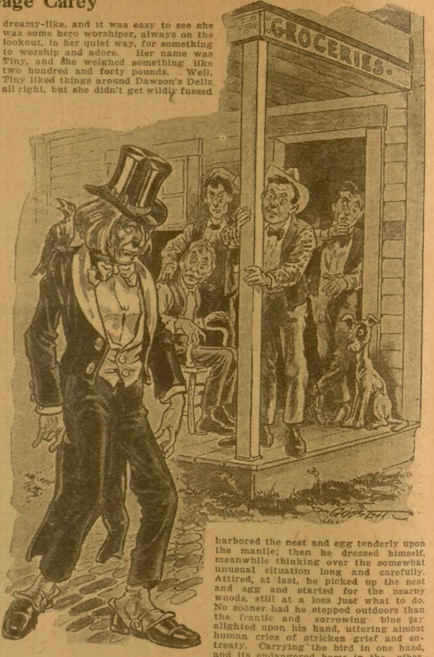
"No—and you cannot call every nanny-goat a buttress; but believe me, each of the species we're talking about has some secret inclinations that way bound to crop out some time or other. To substantiate my claim, Baron, I'll just relate an incident in connection with the life of the ancient gent that went by here a moment ago. We'll call it 'The Mystery of the Shrewberry Shrubbery.'"

"I should indeed be glad to hear it," said Baron Dome."

* * * * * * *

"Some men," began Speckled Boner, "lay claim to greatness and distinction because of what they've pulled off in art, literature, music—something like that, you know. Well, it was different with Professor Shrewberry; he was a nut on the subject of birds, and he was known for miles around Dawson's Dells on that account; but what made him world-famous—was whiskers! Man, those were some lace curtains which Professor Shrewberry carried around on his submaxillary—eleven feet long, and still growing—the longest chinchillas in the universe! For forty years he spun out that silver shrubbery—nursed 'em, cared for 'em, watched them spring to greatness as a mother would an offspring. They were a wonderful sight, but enough to make the poor gink that invented the safety razor turn over in his grave. And how the women folks fell for them alfalfas—oh, boy!

"One of the other profs in the intellect-stretcher up on the hill had a niece from back East come to visit him. She had big, soulful eyes, was sort of up about anything until she saw the Shrewberry shrubbery; then she fell dreamy-like, and it was easy to see she was some hero worshiper, always on the lookout, in her quiet way, for something to worship and adore. Her name was Tiny, and she weighed something like two hundred and forty pounds. Well, Tiny liked things around Dawson's Dells all right, but she didn't get wildly fussed like a rainbow trout going up after a coachman fly!



Upon His Right Shoulder Was Perched—a Blue Jay.

"Tiny knew her limitations; she knew she could never have whiskers; but she could be the wife of the man wearing the longest whiskers in the world! That was distinction enough for Tiny; and she began making plans with all the care and skilful finesse of a Government tugboat mining a harbor. Well, in three months she had old Professor Shrewberry in such a daze he couldn't have told a rhinoceros bird from a lop-eared nightingale with the pip! He was daffy about Tiny. His attention was turned from the domestic habits of the diamond-back warbler to the present cost of diamond-set engagement rings; and they become as spoony as a pair of ringtailed love-birds. Some of his friends tried to caution him. 'Professor,' they said to him, 'are you sure it's your inner self and soul that Tiny person is in love with—or your outer foliage?' But at these well-meant words the old Professor turned aside with indignation, with the mere observation: 'Whiskers is all right—but Tiny loves me for myself alone!'

"Well, to make it short, Baron, the day for the wedding was set. The night before the scheduled big event, the Professor retired early; and, in order that his whiskers might take on added glow and luster for his wedding morn, he retired to his bed leaving eight feet of his silvery excelsior hanging out of the window to sway back and forth in the night breeze.

"By dawn the eager bridegroom was awake; he sprang lithesomely from bed, went to the window and began hauling in cable, hand over hand. Suddenly something fluttered out from the meshes of the silvery sheen; it was a frightened bird—a blue jay! Carefully, then, Professor Shrewberry hauled up the balance of the forty-years' crop; and within the inner meshes he discovered that the poor, trusting jay had built a nest; within the nest was an egg!

"What was he to do!

"Now, most men, perhaps, upon their wedding morn, would have dumped that nest out unceremoniously. Not so Professor Shrewberry, the ornithologist! He laid that portion of his whiskers which harbored the nest and egg tenderly upon the mantle; then he dressed himself, meanwhile thinking over the somewhat unusual situation long and carefully. Attired, at last, he picked up the nest and egg and started for the nearby woods, still at a loss just what to do. No sooner had he stepped outdoors than the frantic and sorrowing blue jay alighted upon his hand, uttering almost human cries of stricken grief and entreaty. Carrying the bird in one hand, and its endangered home in the other, he walked on rapidly toward the woods.

"This was the situation: Here was a bird, which, in simple, trusting faith, had chosen the silver shrubbery for a place to build its nest—to rear its young—to help perpetuate the race of blue jays! On the other hand, there was forty-years' growth of luxuriant verdure in the balance: should it be sacrificed to provide a furnished apartment for a cockeyed blue jay? Should it? There was more than himself now to be considered—there was Tiny. Could he square things with [illegible]? Well, he thought he could—and the cries of that mother blue jay were tearing his heart-strings.

"He returned to the house; he found a pair of shears. One hour later the silver sheen—in which rested upon her nest a happy mother-bird—fluttered from the back window; and the face of Professor Shrewberry was as destitute of hair as the cue ball in a pool game!

"Then he hied him away to greet his blushing bride. She met him at the door, gave him the once over, then slammed the door in his face, saying such things, meanwhile, that he could never have believed his little Tiny capable of saying! She returned to Poughkeepsie on the afternoon train. Crushed, broken, a changed man from that moment, Professor Shrewberry returned to his work on the hill.

"There is one bright gleam in this rather sordid and sorrowful narrative, Baron—the gratitude of that befriended blue jay! Whenever it can be spared from home, it seeks out the lonely Professor, who, for its sake, had sacrificed all—everything; and in its poor, weak way it tries to soothe and comfort him for the loss of both wife and whiskers. You have heard the story, Baron—and you seem affected——"

"Yas-s," drawled the Baron, "I was just thinking—" he removed his hat, and wiped the moisture from the top of his slick, glittering dome—"I was just thinking that perhaps 'Tiny' might be interested in becoming the wife of the baldest man in the world!"

The next story in this series will appear next week. It is entitled "The Lady Durham Affair."

* * *

Fault of the French.

"Does your son who is abroad with the troops understand French?"

"Oh, yes, but he says the people he meets there don't seem to."

The Brown Sea God

By William H. Manning

Be Sure and Read This First

JOHN TERRIMORE, washed overboard from a schooner, lands on the island of Kayenso among a group of beach-combers. There isn't a chance of getting away, Jarrick, their spokesman, says. Terrimore, discovering a violinist, known as "Fiddler" Frink, among them, feels sure that, with himself as promoter and publicity man, they can earn the money with which to pay their passage away from the island. Terrimore meets Rabayo, a young Kanaka, who asks him to help found and become the president of a university for the natives. Terrimore hears other Kanakas hail his companion as "The God of the Seas," Rabayo speaks of half a million dollars being available for the university and leads him away to give him the proof.

Terrimore meets Rabayo's sister, Cicilee, by birth a princess. She shows Terrimore an old map showing a wrecked lighthouse in which pirates had concealed their loot. Alonzo, son of the lighthouse keeper, had escaped and, dying many years later, made his will in Cicilee's favor. Terrimore promises to help recover the treasure. Meanwhile Fiddler Frink has been spying upon them. Terrimore meets Barro, a general of the hill keepers. Terrimore, blindfolded, is taken to see the treasure. Terrimore begs them to put it in a bank. Back on the island Terrimore departs to find a place to sleep and seeing a drifting canoe, wades out to it and makes a startling discovery. Terrified, he hastens away.

Now go on with the story, or, if you wish the first installment in full, order a back copy of the issue No. 48, December 1, in which it appears. It may be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from the office of publication.

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CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE the American had gone a dozen feet he became thoroly ashamed of himself, and he turned back as hastily as he had faced toward the shore. The canoe had resumed its leisurely drift, and, overtaking it without trouble, he again put a captor hand upon its rail. Holding it fast, he tried to look inside, but found the water just deep enough to baffle him.

Getting his feet well under him he towed the craft shoreward. What else he towed he did not know. His hand, making the investigation of the moment before, had suggested a good deal, but it was no time for timidity and he composedly turned his back on the mystery and waded on in the shallowing water.

A few moments of effort brought him to solid land, and he drew the canoe high enough to guard against its going adrift. Then he looked inside. Some starlight drift struggled down and made the night less dark, so he was able to see in a considerable degree. Looking, he fell to muttering.

"A woman! Lying at full length, motionless, silent, and perhaps——"

His scare of the recent minute had been caused by placing his hand upon a face that was half covered with her unbound hair—a face that he had been led to believe was cold and like that of the dead. More resolute now, he again touched the face.

"Cold, sure enough," he murmured, "but only a little bit so. Possibly only the natural damp of night and inaction. Let me see—ah! she breathes all right. No dead woman about her. I had my fright for nothing. The surprise of finding her so oddly gave me stage fright."

Life was certainly there, but he found no evidence that she was conscious. Filled with pity, he pushed back the hair that had strayed down and enveloped her face. Convinced that she was young, he also found signs that she was of the well-to-do rank in life.

"How did she get here?" he wondered, continuing his mutterings. "This is a native canoe, but that proves nothing. No paddle anywhere about, no painter, nothing except this one unconscious passenger. Well, here we are, but where is here?"

He had not been on Kayenso long enough to be familiar with more than a small part of the topography of the island, but as he looked closely about him he believed that some minor objects met with previously were in sight, rocks and trees.

Most important of all, he distinguished a dark outline some rods distant that, tho not showing any light, had the appearance of a house. Bedtime was perhaps past, but he felt that the woman should be placed in protecting hands at once.

In the absence of a painter or other rope, he utilized stout vines that were where they were wanted, made the canoe fast, and then prepared for the more important part of his adventure.

Lifting carefully, he soon had his charge in his arms and, setting his face toward the supposed house, he moved away. His burden was not light, but he persisted and drew back from the water. He presently had proof that the dark object was a house, and found himself getting close to it.

"Nobody astir that I can see. Well, anyhow, they must care for my lady of mystery. She's growing warm to my touch—she's bound to live, but she needs help. Maybe, as her guardian, I shall get a bed for the night myself, and something to eat. Wonder what room will be mine?"

Closer he moved to the building, and finally his feet were on the lower step of the piazza. This was a large, wide, plant-ornamented place, and he could see nothing in its dark interior, but it was certain that an entrance must be just beyond, so, after a long rest, he mounted the higher steps without hesitation. Advancing, he wondered who lived there, but felt confident that the unconscious girl would be received with kindness when he had made her affliction known.

Reaching the piazza floor, he paused to locate the entrance definitely, but was finding himself checked by the potted palms and the resultant darkness when conditions suddenly changed.

Electric lights flashed up on the piazza, and all of the open space became clear to the vision. And, a dozen feet away, a man stood looking at him steadfastly, a revolver half raised. The American was being subjected to a sharp, unfriendly scrutiny, and there was no improvement as the householder continued to look.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, his voice having a steel-like pitch. "What's going on here, anyhow?"

"Sir," the young man answered, "I beg that you will give your help in this difficulty. Neither I nor my companion wishes to force ourselves upon your hospitality unduly, but as this lady is in a faint, I trust you will furnish a motor car, or something of that sort, to take her to her friends."

"Indeed!" was the sarcastic retort. "You plan well. Why not take her to your own house?"

"I have none. You see——"

"I certainly do see. Moreover, I recognize you as a man I've had a look at, not far back. You are a beach-comber."

"Just what do you imply by that?" sharply demanded Terrimore.

"A beach-comber is a man without money who won't work to get money. Is that clear enough for you? To be more personal, I've seen you drifting around in the town, asking for money, and failing to get any. Very little cash is ever handed to your sort hereabouts."

"Look here!" the American retorted, his manner seething with hostility, "I don't know who you are, nor anything about you, but you have shown a red flag that you've got to haul in. I've asked for no money except in the way of business, and I'm no beach-comber. If you persist in saying that I am, I'll thrash you for saying it, later. Just now, this lady demands all our attention——"

"What are you doing with her?"

"Taking her to her friends."

"Who are they?"

"I don't know. Altho you and I are bound to be enemies to the limit when she is cared for, possibly we can drop our quarrel long enough to settle her case. I infer that you and she both live in Kayenso. If so, perhaps you know her. If you do, who is she?"

"A member of my household, and, more explicitly, my niece. What you are doing with her I don't know, but after you have had a night in jail you may tell me. Jail! That may not sound well to you, but that's where you are to sleep tonight. Understand?"

"Assuming that you tell the truth as to her, it strikes me that you are an affectionate uncle. You see what condition she is in, yet, instead of being anxious for her welfare, you stop to insult me. That need not worry us, but as I lack faith in you I demand proof that she is your niece before I will leave her to your care. I don't believe in confiding lambs to wolves so clearly defined as you are."

"Jail, I say!" snarled the man. "That's where you are going. I'll call an officer at once——"

"Wait a bit, uncle!"

The burden in Terrimore's arms stirred and the voice was from the same quarter. A more pronounced movement led John to release his hold carefully and she stood erect, reasonably firm.

"You two men will never get anywhere in your talk," she resumed. "The clear brain of a woman is required. You, uncle, will not send this gentleman to jail, and he will not flog you for insulting him. On the contrary, both of you will drop the cudgels of war.

"No!" declared the uncle.

"But I say yes. You know nothing about my late adventure. Or do you know? Speak out!"

"This man brought you here —"

"Which was very kind of him. In a way I was unconscious when he brought me, but, really, my condition was a mere deadening of the bodily powers, with the brain active. I don't profess to understand it. You see, I was out canoeing, and was passing under the cluster of trees that overhang the water at Lilisu Point, when something—a dead branch from a tree, I dare say—fell and struck me to the bottom of my craft."

"Or," suggested the uncle, derisively, "was it a man who struck you?"

"I have told you. To continue, I lost power of motion, tho my mind was fairly clear. It grew clearer as my canoe drifted on, and I was fully conscious when this gentleman rescued me and brought me here. His act was noble."

"Generous Ethelda!" scoffed the man.

"I tell you I was never unconscious," cried the girl, spiritedly. "Also, I decline to hear any more remarks derogatory of the gentleman who has so kindly helped me out of my bad plight."

She turned to Terrimore and, revealing a young, comely face, smiled upon him freely.

"Sir," she pursued, "I am Ethelda Sargeant, and this is my uncle, Mr. Milloway Dick. His bark is worse than his bite. Don't be upset by his nightmare words. Think only of me! I am truly grateful for your kindness, and hope to see you again tomorrow. Be sure to call. Your name is——"

"Terrimore, madam."

"Give that name to the servant and nobody will venture to refuse you admittance. I shall expect you tomorrow."

Miss Sargeant had the right of way. Seemingly none the worse for her late adventure, she stood lightly on her feet and smiled and talked with no lack of words. Milloway Dick looked on, pulling hard at his mustache, eying her gloomily, but silenced by something apparently decisive. Perhaps it was the will power of his niece.

Terrimore, somewhat bewildered and wholly without comprehension, vaguely realized that he was dismissed, and he backed toward the door with the farewell of good breeding. Miss Ethelda followed, and at the threshold shook hands with him cordially.

"Tomorrow!" she repeated. "Don't forget!"

"I will remember," he returned. "Tomorrow!"

He was obeying orders, but even the good-humored, pretty face before him did not stir him to animation. Without being in an actual daze he was near it, for he felt that he was groping in mental darkness.

When his feet touched earth he walked away with quick steps, well pleased to be free from the events just presented to him. Mechanically making an analysis as he went, he arrived at decision on certain points of his latest strange happenings.

"Miss Ethelda dealt romance out liberally," he mused. "She was not conscious when I found her in the canoe, nor when I carried her to the house. Probably she came back to life when I was sharpshooting with old Dick, and guessed the rest out closely. Then she told her little story to tame her uncle. Not a bad sort of a damsel!"

He broke off with a laugh that had a measure of heart in it.

"Another adventure, and no supper out of it. I'll take no more chances. Somebody might show up that would give me a cut of meat or a slice of bread. Dangerous to risk it, so I'll hunt up the bushy nook of my last night's sleep. In the lack of an orthodox bed, I can use the nook all over again. Here's for it!"

The place was not far distant, and, reaching it, he crawled into the choicest recess among the group of bushes and, settling down, drew a deep breath of relief.

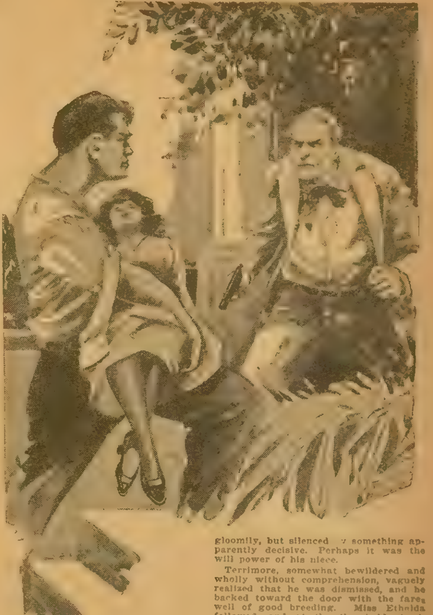
"Now," he thought, "if I only had that slice of bread, to be followed by a smoke—by the way, didn't Fiddler Frink give me an extra cigarette?"

He thrust a hand into his pocket, fumbled briefly, and then withdrew it quickly. He held something, but it was not a cigarette.

"Say, what's this?" he exclaimed. "Feels like money, and is shaped like bank-notes. I wonder if I've got an overflow of optimism——"

Fumbling again, he finally happened upon a match, which he lighted.

"Cash," he murmured thoughtfully. "A two-dollar bill, plus two ones. Luck of Jack Beanstalk, and wealth of Midas! Where did this shower come from? Oh! Miss Ethelda must have passed them over when saying good-by. Anyhow,



"Jail! May Not Sound Well to You, but That's Where You Sleep Tonight."

I've got the bills. Ah! Four dollars rich, but—nothing to eat!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHANCE traveler along a certain part of the Kayensan shore might have witnessed an unusual scene, the following morning. Eight men in dubious garments that ranged from mere rags to seedy fabrics that were nearing rags were seated on rocks that lined the edge of the beach, and every man was eating from a decent-looking plate.

These men were Peter Jarrick and part of his fellow beach-combers.

Near them stood a Chinaman who watched proceedings with a pail and a big spoon in his hands. He was as clean as the social outcasts were dirty, as well dressed in his native style as they were ill clad, as respectable of appearance as they were down-at-the-heel, and, in consideration of these things, he might have regarded them with disdain, but his face was inscrutable as he watched the consumption of the food.

Footsteps sounded and Jarrick, looking up, raised a shout.

"Hello, Terrimore! Just in time! This way! The fat of the land has tumbled into our laps, and breakfast for all hands has been brought to us by this Chinaman. He can't, or won't, tell who paid the bill, but I suspect that the United States Government has remembered my former faithful service as consul and sent him——"

It was certainly John Terrimore, and he joined his disreputable friends.

"Breakfast?" he returned. "Real thing, eh? Solids and liquids, just like what human beings eat. And all for you——"

"For you, too!" interrupted the Chinaman. "Sit down easy and eat. Plenty for all. Wash yourself first—oh! no, you are not dirty, like the others. But you can eat. Here is an empty plate. I will fill it, and do you then take a spoon and send the food down the little red lane that leads to your stomach. All this is free."

He dipped from the pail with his big spoon, filled the plate, and passed the food to Terrimore. The latter sat with the other men and began to eat with relish.

"Greatest thing I ever heard of, Johnny," declared Jarrick.

"What is great?" John asked.

"This feast. We gentlemen of leisure happened to sleep near each other, last night, as the handy bushes looked good and travel was hard; so we all heard the call when this Chink gentleman strayed along, some few minutes ago, and announced that free food was in the pail. He can't, or won't, tell who pays the bill. Mystery!"

"Some fool has cashed up for us beach-combers," growled Cranky Rigard, shoveling eatables diligently.

"Say, good Chinaman, state who our benefactor was," urged Red Rufus.

"I don't know," replied the Celestial. "Last night my partner, Li Sing Lee, was alone in the restaurant. When I came back, this morning, he told me of this order. Late in the night a white man came in, ate a whole lot—yes, oh, plenty lot!—and then gave directions for this breakfast. My partner was afraid he was going to be cheated, but the stranger showed him a two-dollar bill and two ones, so he took his pay and agreed to everything. I have brought what the man paid for, and that is all I know. Who he was nobody knows."

"He cast his bread upon the waters," added Easy Wiggin, "and we chaps profit by it, but he was a fool. Ah! this tastes good, but even taste doesn't fully make me believe we really have got a square meal. By the way, I still wonder why we've got it? Anything ever come our way before? And why has it come now?"

"Beach-comber's luck," said Red Rufus. "It goes good one time in ten thousand."

"Where is Fiddler Frink?" asked Terrimore.

"Just what we've been asking," replied Rufus. "He is entitled to a share, and will miss it unless he gets here soon. Nobody has seen him this morning. He followed you when you left us, last night."

"Followed me? What do you mean?"

"Oh! Just simply strolled that way after you left," explained Jarrick.

"I'm not so sure about it being a casual walk of his," persisted Rufus. "He eyed you sharp as you left, and then pretty soon got going the same way, as I said. Be you sure he didn't overtake you and ask what your talk about his fiddle meant?"

"I've not seen him since I left him with you. If I know his make-up, smell of this breakfast will soon bring him along to eat."

It was not an unreasonable prediction, but Frink did not come. When all the others had eaten fully, the Chinaman, refusing to leave a plate, placed the little that remained on a broad leaf and returned to the town. It was for the missing man when he appeared, for he had become an object of strong interest to the beach-combers.

Terrimore found himself the center of a question mark. From Tall Jarrick down to the usually taciturn Luke Doll, all wanted an explanation of his previous remarks about Frink and his violin.

"Now," urged Wiggin, "how is money to be made out of that fiddle?"

"I will tell that later," John promised.

"Why not now? Give the rest of us chance to help you think."

"Wait until we see Frink. He seems to be a thinker, himself."

"Don't you trust that fellow too far," urged Rigard. "He's as big a crook as walks Kayenso."

"Sure!" agreed Murphy. "I happen to know that he served two different terms in prison back in the States."

This news did not impress Terrimore especially, as his own judgment already bade him distrust Fiddler Frink. Another point was more direct and, perhaps, more personal. Had the fiddler really followed him, the previous night? If so, what was his object? If so, again, what had he seen?

John recalled that he had gone directly to the farther beach with the Brown Sea God, and then to the lighthouse. Had Frink spied upon him? If he had, what, if anything, had he learned of the purpose of the trip in the canoe? What, if anything, did he know of the ruined lighthouse?

Possibilities made the American ill at ease, and, as soon as he could do so without expecting to awaken suspicions, he left his companions and walked away toward the west, the course of the previous night. He tried to make his manner natural, but was aware that unkindly looks were upon him. He had talked of money for all from Frink's violin, and, disregarding the fact that the cash was still a mere dream, they were afraid of being cheated.

Ugly liabilities were not to be overlooked, for the men would do anything for money.

John's mood was irritable as he receded. He was the customer of the Chinaman who had paid for the beach-combers' breakfast, and he was not certain that he was pleased by his own act. Using valuable cash that he had disliked very much to accept, he had depleted his store to a worrisome degree, and was getting only disquieting looks in return.

Long Odds!

FAR down in the South Pacific it lay, a small uncharted emerald island on the bosom of the ocean. Men had spent years searching for it—spent them vainly, futilely. For beside the lake far in its interior there lay an old Portuguese treasure ship aground, chuck full of gold, diamonds, rubies, pearls—all waiting for the man who would go and get them. But to find the island! There lay the rub. Jason Kline's imagination was stirred. He would do what other men had not been able to do. He would find that island. The story is told complete in next week's issue of the Ledger. It is called, "The Isle of Illusion" and it is the tale of the strangest Christmas cruise on record.

"The knaves would stab me in the back for a dollar," he mused. "I was a fool to bring up the fiddle idea so publicly. They are afraid of being swindled out of their share—great Scot! Just where and what is their share? Filled with the breakfast I idiotically gave to them, they are even fuller of rascality."

These musings were abruptly interrupted as footsteps sounded behind him. Turning, he saw Tall Jarrick. That man arrived with hurried steps and a flushed face.

"I say, Terrimore," he began promptly, "let's turn away from the beach a bit and lose ourselves in the woods yonder. I want to speak to you, and do it without delay."

John gave him a probing glance, thought quickly and decided upon his course. Making an assenting gesture, he swerved from his course and the bushes at once hid them from view. Jarrick swept a backward look and began to speak with haste.

"See here," he said, "it's best for both of us that we have a clear understanding. Socially, we are gentlemen. I was formerly U. S. consul at Feroro Island, and we are both of the first families, while the scum back there are dregs of life—mere dregs, sir! You and I are disgraced by being in their company. Now, you have a scheme to make money out of Fiddler Frink and his violin. A share of the money therefrom is wanted by the scum, the dregs——"

"Yes?" said John, breaking in calmly.

"Yes, they want it, but they don't deserve it. They are not in our social class. Now, see here, I've spoken of this before, but let's have at it again. Let's plan so that only you and I and Frink snare in that money."

"How can that be done?"

"That I can't say, for I don't know what your plan it, but there is no question as to the main feature. Frink's fiddle is the foundation stone, and Frink is a remarkable player. Do the two facts go together?"

"I haven't explained yet."

"Terrimore, I won't urge you," said Jarrick, almost purringly, "but there is more to this than you know of now. Those fellows back there are determined they will each have his share when the money is divided, but that isn't all. They plan that, after the division, they will put you and Frink out of the way—kill you, mind!—and so secure all of the cash."

The tall man talked and his companion listened, studied his face and drew deductions. That Jarrick was as big a knave as any of the rest he did not doubt, but John was certain that most of what he said was true.

Astonishing as the fact was, it seemed that the beach-combers had really schemed to do murder for a cash sum not yet acquired, nor seen, nor clearly planned for, and by them only a dream,—thus far.

"Think of it," added the tall man. "To kill you!"

"Ah!" said Terrimore, noncommittally.

"One notion of theirs is that the money is concealed inside of Frink's violin, and that only you know of it. Hidden cash, I mean. Others have it that it's still got to be earned. Anyhow, they are money mad, and wild ideas circulate in their depraved heads."

The speaker broke off, took a forward step and grasped John's arm.

"See here," he exclaimed, "where is Frink now?"

"Where?" Terrimore repeated. "Give it up! I don't know."

"You may be asked to tell right soon, so I'll be frank and explain the whole mischief that's afoot. Between us two, the men back there want to know if you've got Frink to run away, or whether you've murdered him!"

CHAPTER IX.

TERRIMORE stared blankly at his companion. In spite of the previous talk the last remark seemed too absurd to be taken seriously. Jarrick's expression, however, prevented the suspicion of a jest, or of haphazard words.

"Somebody's crazy!" John exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

"Frink is missing," Jarrick explained, "and the fellows are questioning whether possibly you sent him away from Kayenso or kill him."

"Rubbish! You know I have no money to send anybody anywhere."

"Right there comes in the theory that money was hidden in the violin, and that you knew of it, but Frink didn't know. Now, according to that suspicion, you've set Frink wise, divided the cash with him and got him to leave the island."

"Sensible argument! Wisdom worthy of an imbecile! If the notion was true, would I send Frink away, or would I promptly skip out myself?"

"Er-r-r! Strong argument that, but I'm only quoting the fellows. That doesn't dispose of their suggestion that you've killed the fiddler."

"Why do they think anything unusual has befallen Frink? He was around last evening. Why do they call him missing now?"

"Several reasons," Jarrick returned. "He has been browsing for scraps of food for breakfast pretty regular with Luke Doll and Jerry Westall lately, but he hasn't come this morning. Two reasons why that's queer. He and Luke set a snare yesterday for wild chickens, and they were eager to see if they had a chick this sunup. Also, Jerry admits that he and Frink were going to raid a little store back in town, two hours before daybreak, while the proprietor was asleep. All this cut out work for the fiddler, but he hasn't shown up."

"Do those prophets of evil know what time it is? Because Frink is ten minutes late for breakfast does that prove he has run away from Kayenso, or been murdered?" asked Terrimore, sarcastically.

"He didn't come around to do the burglar act with Jerry," the tall man persisted.

"If you think he's murdered or has fled, why do you urge me to take him and you into my confidence in order to get all the money for us three? Did you ever have a dead man for an active partner?"

"I don't say that I believe in what the fellows say. Strictly speaking, they don't yet really believe in their own notions. They simply notice that the fiddler is missing, and wonder why, and also wonder if you've done him violence."

Terrimore laughed with a sudden flow of real mirth.

"Tell your beach-comber friends that they are shallow-pated fools!" he retorted lightly.

"John, let me say seriously—wait a bit! Do you refuse to admit me into the deal with you and Frink, shoving the other chaps to the rear?"

"I'll make no such bargain with you."

"Just as you say, but let me impress one matter on your mind definitely. If Frink doesn't show up, and if evidence appears that he has been murdered or has run away, look out for the beach-combers! Frankly, they wouldn't hesitate an atom to butcher you."

"An amiable gang!"

"They have no grudge against you personally, understand, but business is business, and they will stick to orthodox forms. Watch out, or they will put you to sleep once and forever."

Tall Jarrick stepped back, looked into the stretch of detached bushes, shifted his position again, and again looked very hard along what he could see of the backward way. This done, he straightened up with a jerk.

"I don't want those knaves to know I've been in secret talk with you," he explained. "I'm off now!"

He slipped lightly into the leafy cover, his steps sounded briefly, and then Terrimore saw nobody near him.

"Well, I'll be shot!" he muttered blankly. "What next? I'm surely in a medley of nightmares. Jarrick is as reliable as a shark, but he spoke a lot of truth just now. I'm suspected of doing harm to Fiddler Frink just because he's missing——"

The young man's thoughts took a new turn. It was little to him that Frink was late to breakfast, but the claim that the man had followed him, the previous evening, was worrisome.

Had Frink learned the secret of the lighthouse?

The longer this possibility was considered the more troubled John became. When he and the Kanakas went in the canoe to the wreck Frink might have followed in a second boat of some sort, or even have swum to the reef. Once there, he was too keen a man to miss any chance for further discoveries.

Perhaps the beach-comber had gained access to the treasure only a short time after the Sea God took his party away. Half a million dollars was not to be removed easily or quickly, but he did not want Frink to have even a pocketful of it.

After some minutes of meditation Terrimore faced the interior of the island and set off at a brisk walk. The need of explaining matters to Rabayo was pressing, and he went hoping to locate that young man. Just where to look he did not know. The Sea God had said he would see him, but had not told where he might himself be looked for. Having some knowledge of the usual haunts of the native people, he acted upon the theory that Rabayo was likely to keep company with the rest, altho this furnished but a slight clew.

Between the town of the white settlers and the rugged mountain was the diversified land of the island, and it was there that the Kanakas generally had their grass huts. Whether the Sea God had a permanent home anywhere in the region the American did not know, but he was going in search of him.

As he advanced, the way frequently changed, and he passed over levels, small depressions and rises, with now and then a rocky ridge that was a forerunner of the mountain farther south. He had been traversing a belt of scattered trees and had just broken thru the remoter edge and gained the traveled road when he heard the beat of a horse's feet. He was giving this fact only languid attention when the animal swept around a bend in the way and Terrimore's interest kindled.

The horse was saddled, and the rider was Ethelda Sargeant.

The recognition was mutual and nearly simultaneous, and he saw a wide smile appear on her face. She was riding with impressive grace and skill, and when she reined in the animal only a few feet from where he stood it was with expertness.

"Our engagement was for my uncle's house, but the actual meeting is here," she said, laughing.

"And unexpected by me," he replied.

"Like our former one. The only surprise possible in this world would be the end of surprises. It is nothing that I am here. I am a living being, and I make a practice of enjoying my waking moments. Saddle-riding, swimming and canoeing are some of my relaxations. Possibly," and here her expression became arch, "you know something about my canoeing?"

"I won't dispute you," Terrimore answered, understanding.

She leaned forward, shook a dainty finger at him and assumed a serious manner.

"Do you know, sir," she resumed, "that some persons tell whoppers?"

"Most people do, except present company."

"Ah! Think back to last night. I ladled fiction out to good Uncle Milloway, Dick, freely. I did not know when you carried me to the house. Mr. Dick can be disagreeable when he sees fit, so I thought it best to calm his rising temper. Fiction did it. Now, tell me just how you happened to carry me to that house, please."

John told the story, and when he ended she nodded sagely.

"Just about as I guessed it out. Now for the truth. I was out in my canoe and was passing under the trees that overhang the water at Lillsu Point when something hit me on the head and I lost my senses. I surmise, but can't prove, that a falling branch was the felling missile. The next I knew was when you and Uncle Milloway were saying barbed-wire things to each other. I thought your worldly welfare demanded that I make the case seem slight, so I claimed to have been conscious all the while. This kept Mr. Dick from tearing his hair out in a passion. You can yourself affirm that the tiger was tamed."

The girl was light and airy of manner, and Terrimore was strongly impressed. He felt no regret that he had been able to help her, the previous night.

"Expert tamers do good work," he replied.

"By accident, no doubt. Never mind my uncle, too. My adventure was certainly queer, and I am deeply grateful to you for your help. Now, Mr. Terrimore, let's get to other business. I am always a shockingly blunt speaker, so I hope you will forgive what I say this time. Do I have the right impression in thinking you a stranger in Kayenso?"

"Quite right."

"And a traveler?"

"A beach-comber," John grimly admitted.

"If so, I don't believe it is thru your own fault," she said, her steadfast gaze unshaken by the humiliating confession.

"In justice to truth in general, I'll say I was shipwrecked."

"No doubt—excuse me—you have tried in vain to get away?"

"Correct! Nobody will lend me passage money in a ship."

"Wrong! I will do it."

"Pardon me, but you will not, Miss Sargeant!" Terrimore replied, with sturdy decision. "Last night, unless I mistake much, you dropped certain money into my pocket while shaking hands with me in good night. For reasons rather important to me I have accepted that loan—accepted it most gratefully, believe me!—but I can take no more from you. I am unknown to you. It would be wrong, villainously mean, in fact, for me to take more——"

"Think of the favor you did for me!"

"With all due gratitude to you, I cannot, will not trade upon your appreciation of my help. I thank you most heartily, but I must not venture further."

"But surely I may advance you passage money to some port of your choice——"

"No! Pardon me once more, but I refuse. If I borrow from any one the loan must be paid, later, by money I manage to earn somehow. To be clear, I decline to accept money from a lady when the situation is so precarious. Suppose I die suddenly? Shall I permit my body to be coffined when I'm debtor to a lady from whom I borrowed in my days of strength? Never!"

As he made his position known, the American stood firm and sturdy, his eyes steady, his voice as resolute as it was courteous. Unknown to himself, he was an ideal picture of a man who had not been reduced by ill fortune below the standing of a gentleman.

Ethelda heard, saw and considered, and she suddenly reached forward and grasped his hand.

"Mr. Terrimore," she exclaimed, "I usually have my own way in what I interest myself in, but this time I yield. It would be criminal to deprive a man like you of his self-respect, for it is a monument of nobility. I yield, but I hope you will soon subdue your troubles. If I can help you in other ways—by good words, I mean—let me know. Either in Kayenso—preferably in Kayenso, but either here or elsewhere, you deserve both money and honors. Let us both think hard until we see each other again. For now, good day!"

Her words and manner, full of gravity and strength until she was near the end, suddenly lightened, and, with the old gay smile fully back, she nodded to him, touched her horse and was soon cantering away, her face toward home.

John watched her until the slowly bending road carried her beyond its bordering bushes, and then commented tersely:

"Not halfway bad!"

Resuming the ascent of the rising ground, he soon thrust a hand into his pocket, where his investigating fingers found a single bank-note and sundry coins, the sum that remained after he had paid for the breakfast for the rundown men of the beaches. In a time of stress he had accepted that much from Ethelda, and he was deeply grateful, but he intended it should be an end of her cash offerings.

"Odd!" he mused. "All men have refused me, tho diligently asked, while she, a woman, has given unsolicited and freely, and wishes to give more. I wonder why? Her heart is different, and more kindly, and yet I wonder why? She has offered me money, and, hang it, I must refuse! Bad! To accept was impossible, and to decline was to stay in poverty. That's what I call having both hands tied."

Walking onward, he meditated for a full minute and added the verdict:

"It's what Red Rufus would term beach-comber's luck!"

A little later he reached a stretch of fast-rising, rough land where trees, cliffs and vines were mixed together in an area of ridges and depressions, and his mind turned to the Brown Sea God and the topographical difficulties.

The knowledge he had of the way, limited as it was, made him certain that the native huts were beyond this ridge, so he assayed to pass it as soon as was convenient. It was a check to steady advance when he arrived at a chasm that intersected his course like a knife, and he bent to look for a way down.

Just then there was a loud crashing on the other side, and as he again looked he saw two men bounce down a rough slope, locked in a hostile embrace and struggling fiercely against each other. It was a vicious fight, but, a moment later, they struck a tree and their hold was broken. One of the two gained his feet after an effort, and John recognized him.

It was the lately missing Fiddler Frink.

Proof that he had not murdered Fiddler Frink lay within John Terrimore's grasp, if he could but seize it. He sprang forward and—— Next week's installment of this story adds new mystery to this already unusual story. Don't miss it. Ask the agent to save you a copy.

MY LITTLE DEAD BOY

BY FRANCIS LEDWIDGE.

He will not come, and still I wait;
He whistles at another gate
Where angels listen. Ah, I know
He will not come; yet if I go
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted in the flowery grass?

The moon leans on one silver horn
Above the silhouettes of morn;
And from their nest-sills finches whistle,
Or, stooping, pluck the downy thistle.
How is the morn so gay and fair
Without his whistling in the air?

The world is calling; I must go.
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted in the shining grass?

* * *

Bobbitts, the Opportunist.

"OH, SAY, Mr. Stevans!" exclaimed Bobbitts, scrambling down from the porch and running across the street, "if you're looking for any one to take with you to the movies, why I've got nothing to do!"

Stevans lifted the little fellow off his feet, and swung him high in the air. "You think you'd like to go to the movies, do you?" he asked. "Well, come along then, old chap!" They went down the street hand in hand.

After the movies were over Stevans took the little boy to the candy shop on the corner. Bobbitts had a chocolate soda, and afterward Stevans gave him a big box of candy, tied with a blue ribbon.

"Aunt Maida, I know she's sorry she said what she did to you," said Bobbitts timidly, as they ate. "I think she's awful sorry. I heard her say to mamma that if you would 'polergize she'd be glad to make up with you. Why don't you 'polergize?'"

The man closed his lips tightly. "I have done nothing to apologize for. I have been the victim of one who deliberately set out to ruin my character. You don't know what I'm talking about, do you, Bobbitts? Well, never mind."

"'Polergize anyway," advised the little boy sagely. "That's the way I always do! Yesterday I screamed 'Get out!' to the cat, 'cause it was going to drink all the milk off of grandma's porridge, and mamma said that I said it to grandma, and I said I didn't, but I saw there was no use arguing, so I 'polergized to grandma."

Stevans laughed. "Well," he told the boy, "your aunt, evidently, doesn't want to see me very badly, or she wouldn't have condemned me, as she did."

"I think she's awfully sorry," repeated the little boy, as he slipped regretfully down from his chair. He thought of all the good times he had missed since Stevans had ceased to be a nightly caller. "I tell you what let's do. You come up to my house, and wait in the dark, so Aunt Maida can't see you, and I'll 'polergize for you. Honest, I'm an awful good 'polergizer. I get lots of practice around our house."

They left the candy shop. It was entirely dark outside. Bobbitts counted the lights along the way, while the man smoked in silence. The little boy became so interested in his pursuit that he ran far ahead of his companion, and so it was that his Aunt Maida discovered him, all alone.

"Bobbitts," she almost sobbed. "Oh, where have you been, darling? We've all been so worried about you!"

"I went to the show with Mr. Stevans," explained the boy, triumphantly. "We talked about you and——"

"About me!" echoed the girl. "Tell me what Mr. Stevans said!"

A tall figure loomed forward thru the darkness. Aunt Maida uttered a little shriek, and turned to run toward the house. The man caught her arm and held her back.

"I'll tell you what he said!"

Bobbitts' grandmother and mother were coming up the walk. They seized Bobbitts and embraced him. His Aunt Maida made a little movement as if to run away, but she was drawn into the obscurity of the lilac bushes.

"Where's Aunt Maida and Mr. Stevans?" said Bobbitts, suddenly. "I got to do some 'polergizing around here."

However, the need for an apology was gone. Also Bobbitts was considerably forgotten.

* * *

The Wrong Doctor.

"IT'S A bad business taking things for granted," observed Spoonable. "The other day a stranger came to our front door. He had all the earmarks of a book agent and I undertook to run him off the place. I have been very successful in throwing book agents over the front gate. But this man turned out to be a teacher of physical culture, who came to the door to ask directions.

"It seemed to me that I hit the ground in eight different places at once, and it took me three-quarters of an hour to figure out that it wasn't an earthquake I had been up against."

"I always had a weakness for jumping at conclusions," confessed Quinne, "and I don't know how often it has got me into trouble. The other day I was introduced to a distinguished stranger who was addressed as Dr. Rambo. He had the appearance of a learned and able man and he won my confidence in a second.

"I have been feeling like an automobile accident for a long time, and realized that I ought to consult a physician, but somehow I haven't much confidence in our local doctors. There wasn't one of them to whom I'd care to uncover the hideous secret of my bad health. But this Dr. Rambo was the kind of man you just naturally lean against the minute you see him. I made up my mind to tell him all about my ailments as soon as I could get him alone.

The next day I glanced out of the window and saw him passing and called him in. I asked him to take a chair and then opened up.

"'Doc,' I said, 'I've been wanting medical advice for a long time, but didn't know a sawbones whom I wanted to take into my confidence. If I had a sick cow I might call in one of our home talent pill venders, but when it comes to turning over my vitals to them I draw the line. Now, you made a hit with me the minute I saw you. I don't know whether its your bulging alabaster brow or your long black whiskers, but something about you convinces me that I can trust you.'

"The doc rose to his feet and raised his hand and tried to say something, but when I have the floor I don't allow any man to interrupt me.

"'I don't know just what's wrong with my works,' I went on, 'but my heart acts as tho it had a dirty spark plug, or something of the kind. Sometimes it will run along, every cylinder hitting, and a man couldn't ask for a more satisfactory heart. Then again it will buck and heave and threaten to stop, and I've been scared stiff several times lately, and if you know any dope that will make the blamed organ get down to cases and saw wood I wish you'd hand me a prescription.'

"The doc seemed distressed and made a violent effort to butt in with a few timely remarks, but I hadn't finished explaining my symptoms and I headed him off.

"'My stomach also is out of alignment,' I explained. 'Time was when I could eat excelsior or anything else and never have a minute's distress. But now I have to bar everything I like to eat and fill myself with gruel and other cheap stuff. What is your diagnosis, doc?'

"'I am not a doctor of medicine,' said he; 'I am a doctor of divinity.'

"Then he backed out of the house and I just sat there and hated myself until I felt myself turning green. The boys heard the story somehow and they've made my life a burden ever since."

The Church Dinner.

MR. SNOGGLES, having punished a hearty (as things come these days) breakfast of mush, bacon and coffee, braced himself for the customary question.

"Oh, dear, what shall I have for dinner?" Mrs. Snoggles inquired.

"Hoove away all you want to, my dear, but don't put any more of that camouflage pudding before me," her husband answered.

Trying to appear unruffled, she remarked that the church was giving a dinner that night, and that it might be that he would rather eat some one else's cooking.

"What does it cost?" he asked. Finding that it was thirty-five cents a plate, he announced that it would be a clear saving of at least fifty cents.

Six o'clock that night saw Mr. and Mrs. Snoggles, each carrying a favorite child, moving in close formation on the basement of the neighborhood church. Satisfaction began from the moment the girl who sold tickets in the entrance absolutely refused to make any charge for two such darling children. She was sure they wouldn't eat much, anyhow. But, then, she had never been a father or a mother, and probably not even a sister.

Mrs. Snoggles found many friends. Thruout the meal they vied with each other to keep her table supplied with food. Some one brought two plates of chicken and mashed potatoes. Some one else carried in a salad, and another poured the coffee. Some one who wished to become acquainted brought a bowl of Lima beans. Little Sue found a spare fork and ate most of her father's meat. Mother fed most of hers to baby. A volunteer waitress noted that the plates were almost empty and filled them up again. She also brought on the apple pie and more coffee.

"Inquire of papa, he knows," Mr. Snoggles said. "We couldn't eat this way at home for twice the money. I'm glad I thought of coming over here. Now, my dear, in a city of this size there must be a church dinner somewhere every night. I believe that by calling up the preachers we can locate these affairs and give them our patronage."

"Sh-h," said Mrs. Snoggles, and just then another piece of pie was set before her husband.

When taps was sounded over the last crumb the happy family sauntered about the room, greeting their friends and inspecting the booths in the bazaar. While Mr. Snoggles was explaining the strategy of the Italian drive, his wife strayed off. But not for long. When her husband looked around for her he noticed two things: she was smiling happily and under her arm she carried a bundle.

"Oh, Vernon," she said, "I found two of the dearest gingham dresses for the children. Only a dollar and a half apiece. And I bought the loveliest quilt. An old lady worked on it for five years. It's a stepladder design, and I got it for $6.

"Everything is so cheap at these church socials. Have you any money?"

* * *

The Man From the West.

THE man from the West strode into Googy's barber shop. Excepting for a slight, steady drizzle, the day was perfect.

"I want a haircut," he said. "I want a haircut, and no talkin'. See?"

And he settled himself in the chair.

"Perhaps——" began the man in the white coat, timidly.

"Hrrooooo!" roared the man from the West, as he drew his double-barreled 66. "Did I say no talkin', didn't I? I've read all the papers and I don't want no news. Now get to work with your scissors. Double quick."

With only a nervous sound in his throat by way of answer, the other obeyed, and the man from the West dropped off to sleep, the little barber shop shaking with his snores. An accidental jab of the scissors in his right ear made him turn in his sleep, and the third jab in the same place woke him up. At the sight of his hair in the glass he started to his feet.

"So it's true, then, what the tenderfeet say!" he ejaculated. "You barbers don't cut hair unless you talk, eh?"

"I don't know, sir," apologized the man in the white coat. "You'd better wait till Mr. Googy comes back. I'm the baker from next door, sir."

* * *

His Good Points.

"SEE here," snapped the editor of the Winkleshire Spasm to the reporter, "you've crammed this obituary notice full of flowery compliments."

"But I thought——"

"This man didn't die in jail, did he?"

"No, sir."

"He was not killed while doing his best to rob a safe?"

"No, sir."

"And he wasn't shot down in a running battle with the police?"

"Of course not, sir!"

"Well, when a man dies a natural death in bed, the public takes it for granted that he had his good points!"

Out of the Ashes

(Continued From Page 4.)

there was no sound except the voice of the wind in the trees. The Doll broke the silence in a harsh whisper:

"Jep, you go back to the horses and have 'em ready for us. Don't you make no noise a-goin', either."

Judson got silently to his feet. A moment later his indistinct figure had been swallowed in the darkness among the trees. The woman reached out and touched the other man's shoulder. "Come on!" she commanded.

The two crept from their hiding-place. Cautiously they drew near to the sleeping figures. The Doll bent and peered in the faces of Gore and Lennox, who slept on one side of the extinct fire. Then she silently gestured toward the figure of the girl on the opposite side. The man and woman approached the prima donna. A moment later Miss Gore's head had been enveloped in a filmy stifling material which the man threw about her. She voiced a muffled scream. A moment later she felt herself lifted in powerful arms which bore her swiftly away. Enmeshed in those muscular arms, she was powerless to struggle.

Back somewhere in the darkness the girl heard the sound of several shots, after which some one fired twice from close beside her. Then she heard some one say in a quick whisper: "Run, d—n you, run!"

After that, for what seemed an interminable blank space, the prima donna whose nerves needed quiet was borne toward some far place. Strangely enough, in her time of wild terror it was not the face of her brother which thrust itself before Elizabeth Gore's vision. It was not to him that she tried to call for help, but to Vaughn Lennox, the man whom she had seen for the first time less than a dozen hours before.

When the bandage was removed from Miss Gore's eyes, dawn was clutching slender fingers over the eastern hills. But this she did not at first notice. It was the pale, hollow-cheeked face of the woman who removed the bandage, which gripped her attention and made her give voice to an almost inaudible exclamation of horror. For, burning in the woman's eyes, she saw an unquenchable hate. Behind the woman stood two evil-looking men. From one of two tents pitched in the mountain pocket came the unmusical snoring of a man who slept deeply.

"So you are Jimmie Gore's sister, you are?" snarled the woman, harshly.

Miss Gore nodded. The cords which bound her wrists together hurt her cruelly. She wondered what it all meant. Her mind darted back to the wild tales which she had heard about the West. She remembered much of crime and lawlessness, but there had always been a reason. For this, there was seemingly no reason.

Then as the horrible eyes of the woman gazed into her own, Miss Gore, by some queer freak of nature, noted that the man in the tent had ceased snoring. She caught a sharp, quick breath. The Doll's lips twisted in soundless mirth, more dreadful than blasphemy.

"Yes, you are Jimmie Gore's sister! Well, you won't be for long, d—n you!"

The woman, as swiftly as a rattler uncoils for a strike, shot out a bony palm and struck the girl on the cheek. The marks of her hand showed on Miss Gore's face at first livid and then a dull red in the half-light. The young woman felt a torrent of wrath run thru her, but she was powerless and could only exclaim, "You devil!"

The two men behind the Doll laughed gratingly and leered into the girl's face. A shudder ran thru her.

The girl's three captors were standing with their backs toward the tent while she fronted them, her feet and hands bound. From behind one of the tents she saw the figure of a man bent almost double steal cautiously into the open. Then she saw him stand upright thirty feet from her. He laid a forefinger on his lips in a silencing gesture. Turning, he climbed swiftly and noiselessly out of the pocket and vanished behind the rocks. There were limits to Billy Bracket's infamy. He might connive to steal his employer's cattle, but this latest deviltry of the Doll's was too much for him.

Lying bound in the tent, with his guard dosing beside him, Bracket had heard the talk outside. It had been a signal for him to begin a desperate fight to free himself from the bonds that held him. Had not the man who had been set to watch him slept, Bracket would not have been allowed bit by bit to wrench his wrists free. His hands freed, it was the work of a moment to him to untie the knot that held his feet.

Free of his bonds, Billy reached over and snatched up the revolver of the other man. Soundlessly he leaped to his feet and shook the other by the shoulder, at the same time thrusting the nose of the weapon close to the cattle runner's face.

"If you make a sound," he grated, "I'll buck you off into the hot place so quick they won't know where to put you when you get there."

The cattle runner, with a vacuous look of stupefaction, submitted while Bracket bound and gagged him.

It was a moment later, when Bracket stepped from behind the tent, that he was seen by Miss Gore, as he gave her what she half guessed to be a friendly signal, and vanished over the rocks. The eyes of the Doll and her companions had been gazing too steadily on the prima donna to note the escape.

Miss Gore wondered what these people were going to do with her. With a great fear in her throat she wondered whether Bracket's gesture had been a friendly one, or whether it had been only a gibe at her in her horrible extremity.

"But why," she reasoned blindly to herself, as she confronted her captors, "why did he take such pains to prevent his departure becoming known?"

Her thoughts were broken in upon by the discordant voice of the Doll.

"I waited for a long time to git back at Jim Gore, and I guess that my time has come. That slap made you mad, didn't it, gal? Well, you hussy, jist wait! You got more comin'."

Somehow, suddenly, the wild panic which had terrorized her since her abduction left the girl. It was succeeded by cold fury, which had its chief source in that cowardly blow. Venomous light leaped into her eyes, to be quenched by a cackling laugh from the Doll.

"Here, help me git her into my tent," commanded the woman

One of the men lifted Miss Gore in his arms and carried her into the tent indicated by the Doll. He was followed by the woman. The man lowered the prima donna to the ground. He turned and left the two women together. Miss Gore sat with her bound feet drawn up close in front of her. The Doll came over and peered malignly down upon her.

"Jim Gore would give a pretty penny to know where you is now," she said briefly.

The taunted one did not answer, but she gazed her hatred in which there was no hint of fear. She wondered what the New York nerve specialist would say if he knew of her present predicament. There was something grotesquely humorous in the thought, and she smiled wanly. The smile enraged the woman who bent over her. The Doll drew back her bony hand to strike again, but at that moment the two men burst into the tent

"Bill's tied up and gagged, and Bracket's gone!" exclaimed one of the men, while the other stood behind him staring foolishly.

The Doll whirled upon her henchmen. Wild anger seemed to spring up and grip her and bear her along in its terrible grasp. In a voice which rose to a high falsetto scream, piercing and rasping, she poured forth a stream of vituperation which few men could have equaled. Springing toward the men, who fell back before her as they might have fallen back before some elemental fury, the maddened woman struck out at each of them. Then she rushed from the tent. The two men followed her

For a moment there was silence outside, then a medley of voices broke out again with the high voice of the Doll dominating.

* * *

His horse drenched with froth from cruel riding since early the night before, Vaughn Lennox, spent and haggard, drew rein to rest his jaded animal twenty miles southward from the spot at which his party had been attacked. A dozen times since the horrible episode of the night before, he had cursed the luck that had sped the bullet from Ida Hendricks' carbine into Jimmie Gore's right lung instead of his own. He knew that Jimmie Gore, with his superior knowledge of the mountains, might have been enabled sooner to track down the abductors of his sister. Lennox did not doubt for a moment but that it was the Doll who was behind the deviltry. He wondered whether Jimmie Gore was dead back there in that little mountain cabin where he had left him at midnight, after having ridden with him across the pommel of his saddle for ten miles

Lennox's tired eyes ranged the wide sweep of canyon and ridge. Within him two emotions fought for mastery—exultation that this woman—this warm, sweet, vital woman had broken the spell that had lain so long upon him, and despair that in the hour of his relief a new catastrophe had possibly snatched his new happiness from him. A great rage against those who sought to harm her also burned in him.

New daylight was above him and a fresh breeze sprang out of the west. Suddenly, from up the trail, he heard the sound of running feet. With a quick motion he cocked his carbine and brought it to his shoulder. A runner dashed into view out of a clump of trees.

It was Billy Bracket. Bracket, catching sight of the rider barring his path, halted. A moment later he was pouring his story into the eager ears of Lennox, as the two made their way up the trail whence Bracket had come. Bracket held to the jaded horse's tail.

Three times Lennox's exhausted mount fell on that perilous five-mile ride from the spot at which Bracket had come upon him to the mountain glade which was the Doll's camping place. In one of these falls his left arm was badly wrenched, but a terrible fear was in him, and drove him on, despite the fact that his arm hurt cruelly and that he knew that he was killing his horse. He knew not what dreadful fate the enemies of her brother had prepared for the woman whom he had come to love.

The two men covered the last five miles in less than forty minutes. Reaching the trail which led from the beaten path to the Doll's camping place, Lennox dismounted. He unslung his weapon. With Bracket in front, he walked toward the Doll's camp.

The camp was surrounded on two sides by shelving rocks; on the other two sides thick undergrowth grew across the ravine, making entrance in the face of vigilant opposition almost impossible by way of the path which cut thru the undergrowth on one side.

When they reached a point about forty yards from the camp the two men halted for whispered consultation. They decided that they would attempt to enter the glade by way of the rocky ledge over which Bracket had made his escape.

The two men approached to where they could look over the edge of rocks. They saw two of the Doll's followers standing beside their horses and tightening the saddle girths. As they watched the Doll came out of one of the tents, followed by the third man, who appeared crestfallen and disconsolate.

"That's the guy I got away from," whispered Bracket, and added: "The gal's in that tent."

He pointed to the tent nearest to him.

The Doll crossed over to the men at the horses. She began talking to them in a voice pitched too low for either Lennox or Bracket to hear. The former thought rapidly in an effort to plan his rescue of Miss Gore.

Those men at the horses evidently were making ready to go in search of Bracket. As soon as they were out of hearing he and Bracket would make a dash for the girl. With a sharp pang he wondered if they had already wrought harm to her.

Suddenly the Doll's voice, a high-pitched screech, came to the ears of the two men.

"If you git him, kill him!" she cried. "We'll tend to the gal!" The woman broke forth in a stream of curses.

"She ain't right," whispered Bracket. "She's plumb loco, but I didn't know it until today."

The Doll's two men mounted and rode away. The Doll and her crestfallen companion turned and re-entered the tent whence they had just emerged. The woman still kept up her cursing. Two or three times Lennox and Bracket heard her execrate the name of Jimmie Gore.

For five minutes Lennox and Bracket waited to allow the two riders to get beyond hearing.

"Come," ordered Lennox, at last. "Let's have a try at them."

The two men climbed quickly and silently down the rocky ledge and descended into the glade. They walked swiftly over to the tent. From within they heard the Doll saying: "You've run your race, my pretty thing."

At that moment a revolver shot sounded inside the tent. Lennox cried aloud and burst inside with Bracket at his heels.

Huddled in a heap on the floor lay the Doll, an ugly red stain starting from her temple, the pistol clutched in her right hand, which lay listlessly on the ground in front of her. The man was on his knees close to her head. Elizabeth Gore, spent and white and bound, sat in the corner of the tent.

"Hit's a-goin—hit's a-goin'! I can see better! I hain't seed things right for a long time—things will be better with me now!" The Doll's voice trailed off into silence. Thus she died, with the clouds breaking over her darkened mind at the last.

The man on his knees looked up Thru the evil lines of his face it seemed that a strange new light was shining.

"She's dead," he whispered and then went on "She was plumb crazy She was a-goin' to kill the gal and then she turned the pistol and kilt herself."

As the man talked Lennox leaped to Elizabeth Gore's side The girl had fainted When she opened her eyes she was in Lennox's arms

"I knew you would come," she said. Her eyes were mistily luminous. Lennox bent down and kissed her on the lips.

"My brother?" she asked.

"He is hurt, but he can't help getting well with you safe," answered Lennox.

He kissed her again, and her lips answered his.

* * *

A woman with pretty teeth and good sense will laugh at a stupid joke.

The Rush of Business.

"Oh, I never will get this Christmas list made out!" said the little stenographer, impatiently, as she hastily threw her notebook into a drawer and grabbed materials to answer the buzzer that was getting frantic. "This is the 'steenth time I've barely got it started when some one wants to write his friend that he enjoyed the dinner he took with him yesterday or wishes to inform some one whom he never saw and never will see that he received his valued favor—which he never even read thru—but tho he can do absolutely nothing for him he begs, most ardently, to remind him that—and so on! Huh! Talk about women gushing!"

The bookkeeper turned an appreciative countenance toward her and prepared to listen.

"Oh, buzz on!" she exclaimed, crossly, as the summons became still more imperative. "I'm engaged for a while yet!" And she snapped a rubber band across the buzzer to deaden the noise.

"Actually, there aren't ten letters a day that are absolutely necessary!" she declared. "There's a lot of folderol, that passes back and forth, and gets filed as business, tho it is simple waste of time and postage. When the men receive the letters they realize what rubbish they are and laugh at them. But when they get started dictating they like the sound of their own voices!

"Why," and she gave her notebook an angry fling, "this thing here, I warrant, has about one page in ten filled with business that needed to be transacted! The rest is gush and affectation! And yet the men pride themselves on their quickness and their lack of red tape and their ability to cope with big situations. And you won't find one man in a dozen who doesn't make supercilious remarks about detail and say that he hasn't time to attend to that—that's what he keeps clerks for!

"I heard Mr. Brown this morning tell his wife over the 'phone that he simply couldn't get home to her luncheon, he was so busy—his desk was simply piled with work. He was very sorry, but business had to come before pleasure, and she'd please make his excuses to the guests and so on—all that rot.

"Well, I expected a busy day when I heard that and so I prepared for rapid dictation. Well, what did I get? To one man he wrote that the matter was on his desk and as soon as he had time he'd look it over and write him in detail, which he begged leave to trust was satisfactory! And to another he wrote that business, as he very likely knew, wasn't what it might be, and therefore he wouldn't be able to go into the matter, but we might in some months' time—perhaps—with which he trusted he might sign himself very sincerely! And to another that he was in doubt as to the advisability of taking out such and such a paper, just at present, but after due consideration he would write him further, and he desired, with great gusto, to subscribe himself his obliged friend. And so on thru the whole list! Why, there wasn't a letter that couldn't have been done away with altogether, let alone being put off until after his wife's luncheon!

"But all those letters made him think he was a very busy man, and I've no doubt that he thinks he's indispensable to the company!

"Some day I'm going to run off a lot of form letters, saying that I'm very sorry, but I haven't yet had time to look into the matter, but will write further when time permits. I think it makes men feel good to tell people they are too busy to think. Perhaps it might be well for me to offer my services as thinker for them!

"They all know that they'll decide against whatever matter it is that keeps pending! It's a hypocritical attitude, to say the least. They pretend to themselves that they're very busy. They pretend to the man to whom they write that the matter really interests them and that they're really going to discuss it, and think it over, when they know they aren't even going to look at it again! And they pretend to the company that they're doing business eight hours a day! And then they'll go home and pretend to their wives that they've had a hard day!

"Oh, I've known too much of them ever to marry one of them! Marriage is purely a confidence game, as I see it, and when you lose confidence—or start in without any—marriage is sure to be a failure!

"Yes, yes, I'm coming as fast as I can!" She moved toward the door. Then she turned a smiling countenance to the bookkeeper.

"Here," she said, good-naturedly, "just remember that what I said was all hasty. Perhaps those men do a lot of pretending, but if you listen carefully you'll hear my own sweet voice telling Mr. Jacobs, in one more minute, how extremely sorry I am that I was delayed and that it was unavoidable! And, do you know, I'd be fearfully angry if they dared intimate to me that I didn't earn my salary or that I wasted a lot of valuable time just hearing myself talk!"

* * *

Men who drink to drown their troubles meet misfortunes with a smile.

The Trials of Economy.

"I'VE decided not to get that new evening gown I was telling you about," remarked Jane. "I don't really need it, and I'm not going to buy a single thing this winter that I can do without. We're going to economize and save heaps of money, and next spring——"

"And next spring you'll buy a car," Luella finished for her. "Oh, I know! But if you're wise, you'll listen to the counsel of a true friend and do nothing of the kind."

"Well, for goodness' sake!" exploded Jane. "Since when did you become an enemy of the automobile industry? Why, I've heard you says, lots of times, that you wanted a car yourself!"

"So I do," replied Luella, calmly, "but if I have to wait for it until I get it by economizing I'll still be waiting when my golden hair has turned to silvery gray.

"It's just two years ago this winter since Peter and I decided that the following spring should find us in possession of a fine new car. We'd been married only a short time, so our furniture was new; we both had plenty of good clothes; and there was a nice little rainy day fund laid by. So we thought it was time to begin saving up for a car, and save we certainly did!

"Peter actually stopped smoking, and bought his lunches at these places where you eat from the arm of your chair, and had me press his clothes instead of sending them to the tailor. And I cut our grocery and meat bills until we'd about got down to birdseed instead of real food, and we had a wan, hollow eyed look and our maid had left. But we were perfectly happy, because out automobile fund was swelling at an amazing rate; and we used to tell each other we'd had no idea it was so easy to save money, and decided that after we bought the car we'd save up for a motor boat, a home in the suburbs, a sealskin coat for me, a fine diamond ring for Peter, and, oh, quantities of other expensive luxuries!

"But just about that time things began to happen. First, Peter got a frigid note from the grocer saying he was sorry to inform us that he could not longer extend credit, but hereafter we would have to buy for cash. Well, we thought there must be some mistake, because we'd always paid our account promptly on the first of the month, without even waiting for a bill. But it wasn't a mistake. The grocer said he understood we were in straightened circumstances, and being a poor man himself he couldn't afford to lose anything with us. Peter was hopping mad and we began trading at another place.

"That was only a beginning. My friends became simply unbearable, trailing in at all hours to sympathize with me because of our 'bad luck;' and wasn't it dreadfully hard to do my own housework—and it was too bad I couldn't afford any new clothes this year; when the styles were perfectly ravishing! Several actually brought in some of their old castoff things and wondered whether I could make them over for myself! When I tried to explain that all was well with us, and that we were only saving our money, they smiled pityingly and said it was awfully plucky of me to put up such a brave front, but really, dear, among friends——

"And then Peter's cousin Arthur and his wife came around one evening and said that if we would like to give up our apartment they would be glad to sublease and take it off our hands. They were very much surprised to learn that we had no intention of giving up the place; and evidently Arthur's wife had set her heart on getting it, for she marched off with her nose in the air, saying that she thought a less expensive apartment would be more in keeping with our circumstances now.

"But it was a few days later that the climax came. The president of the bank where Peter works as third assistant cashier called the poor boy into his private office and gave him the awfulest jolt! He said it had been brought to his attention that Peter was going about looking rather shabby, and he wanted to know what the trouble was.

"Well, Peter told him all about it, but the president wasn't at all sympathetic. He said the bank officials had discussed it among themselves, and they thought if their depositors noticed one of the employes looking shabby, with his elbows all shiny and the creases up the sides of his trousers instead of in front, they'd be afraid he'd be tempted to embezzle their money, and start a run on the bank. And he said, too, that if Peter, after looking hard up for so long, finally blossomed out with a fine new car the depositors would surely think he had embezzled!"

"Good gracious!" murmured her listener, dazedly.

"Yes," said Luella, "it does sound funny, doesn't it? We'd no idea so many people were concerned in our affairs. But that finished our dream of a car, for Peter couldn't afford to [illegible] the bank president. [illegible] pretty nice to have [illegible] and to be able to buy some nice things and look my friends straight in the eye once more. Where are you going, Jane?"

"I'm going off for the butcher shop, to get a nice, thick steak for dinner," said Jane. "I was going to have fried mush, but I've changed my mind!"

* * *

What Is Your Nickel Worth?

A NICKEL doesn't buy very much of some things these days, but it will buy a great deal of knowledge and entertainment if you know how to invest it well. Better than a movie show, more entertaining than anything else you can think of, pleasing to the mind and the eye as well and it's only a nickel. Sixteen pages of pictures and reading matter, serious comment and stories to laugh over—isn't that worth the price? Get your nickel out, hand it to the agent from whom you got this Ledger and ask him for a copy of

The Saturday Blade.

An Unusual Accident.

"SPEAKING of unusual accidents," observed Col. Harta Beetem, interrupting a perfectly good conversation about what will happen to the tariff if the Prohibitionists ever elect a President, "speaking of unusual accidents, I don't think I've ever related to you boys how I once ran over myself."

Nobody said, "Let's hear it, by all means!" so the Colonel continued cheerfully: "Odd mischance, it was, very! Haw! I was making a leisurely sixty-mile-an-hour clip in my little Stirabout, and suddenly I felt the need of a piece of chewing gum. You know how it catches a fellah! Haw!

"Well, donchaknow, I stopped the little Stirabout at a hardware store. The hardware chap was standing in the doorway and I sings out to him: 'Hi, me good fellah, have you any chewing gum in stock?'

"'No,' he says, 'no, but the paint shop across the street sells it. I'll run over and get you some.'

"'Oh, don't bother,' I answered, quick [illegible] over [illegible]

"And, do you know, deah boys, that's just what I did. H[illegible]"

And the Colonel ordered a persimmon [illegible]hball and let the others watch him drink it.

* * *

Still Unbeaten.

THE sergeant-major had the reputation of never being at a loss for an answer. A young officer made a bet with a brother officer that he would in less than twenty-four hours ask the sergeant-major a question that would baffle him.

The sergeant-major accompanied the young officer on his rounds, in the course of which the cook-house was inspected. Pointing to a large copper of water just commencing to boil, the officer said:

"Why does the water only boil round the edges of the copper and not in the center?"

"The water round the edge, sir," replied the veteran, "is for the men on guard; they have their breakfast half an hour before the remainder of the company."

* * *

Some men who believe in the division of labor let their wives do all the work and they do the rest.

Be "U. S. Protected" When Chilling Rains Pelt

Sloshing around in pneumonia-breeding weather, your feet need the rubber footwear that will keep them warm, dry and comfortable and keep you healthy.

U. S. Rubber Footwear

meets the situation—"U. S. Protection" is the all 'round comfort, long wear and economy which you are sure of in every pair of "U. S." Protection for your feet, your health and your pocketbook. Made for heavy service, double duty, reinforced where the wear is greatest, they are bound to give utmost satisfaction.

There are styles suited to every outdoor worker. Every pair carries the "U. S. Seal," the trade mark of the largest rubber manufacturer in the world. This seal is your protection. Look for it and be sure of it.

For sale everywhere. Your dealer has the style of U. S. Rubber Footwear to meet your needs, or can readily get it for you.

United States Rubber Company
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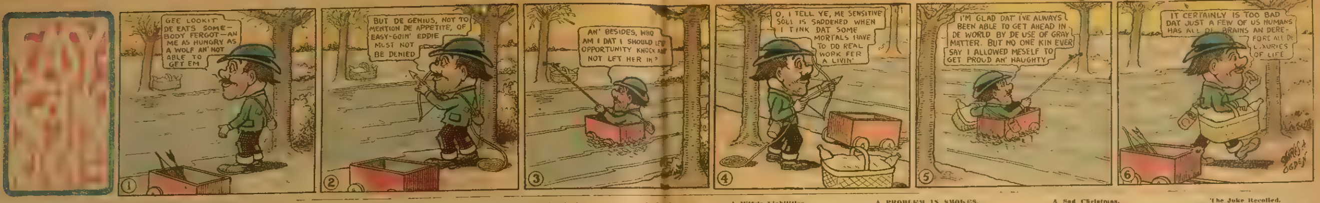

GEE LOOKIT DE EATS SOMEBODY FERGOT—AN ME AS HUNGRY AS A WOLF AN' NOT ABLE TO GET EM
BUT DE GENIUS, NOT TO MENTION DE APPETITE, OF EASY-GOIN' EDDIE MUST NOT BE DENIED
AN' BESIDES, WHO AM I DAT I SHOULD LET OPPORTUNITY KNOCK AN' NOT LET HER IN?
O, I TELL YE, ME SENSITIVE SOUL IS SADDENED WHEN I TINK DAT SOME MORTALS HAVE TO DO REAL WORK FER A LIVIN'
I'M GLAD DAT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO GET AHEAD IN DE WORLD BY DE USE OF GRAY MATTER. BUT NO ONE KIN EVER SAY I ALLOWED MESELF TO GET PROUD AN' HAUGHTY
IT CERTAINLY IS TOO BAD DAT JUST A FEW OF US HUMANS HAS ALL DE BRAINS AN DEREFORE ALL DE LUXURIES OF LIFE
1
2
3
4
5
6
CHARLES A OGDEN

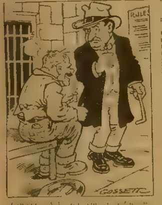
All in the Dream.

Mr. Brown—"I had a queer dream last night, my dear. I thought I saw another man running off with you."

Mrs. Brown—"And what did you say to him?"

Mr. Brown—"I asked him what he was running for."

◆



Lawyer—[illegible]

Burglar—"Reciprocity, [illegible]

[illegible]

◆

Tommy's Tragedy.

The boy came into the house weeping, and his mother was naturally solicitous.

"What's the matter, Tommy?" she asked.

"The boy across the street hit me," he replied.

"Oh, well, I wouldn't cry for that," she returned. "Show that you can be a little man."

"I ain't crying for that," he retorted.

"Then what are you crying for?"

"He ran into the house before I could get at him."

◆

Ask Pa!

"Father," said a youthful seeker after knowledge, "why do words have roots?"

"I suppose," answered the weary parent, "so that the language can grow."

An Apt Pupil.

He was a junior, but keen to get on. His only companion in the first "[illegible]" was a well-known lawyer, who had made a large fortune in his profession.

"I wish you would tell me your secret of success," the young man said.

"I will if you pay my expenses during the few days that I am going to be in New York."

"I will," replied the young man.

"It is in this advice: Deny everything and insist upon proof."

At New York the lawyer enjoyed all the luxury that a good hotel could furnish, regardless of expense, and when the time for his departure arrived he passed the bill, of enormous proportions, to the young man, who was standing near. The latter merely glanced at it and returned it.

"Aren't you going to pay [illegible]" the other.

"Pay what?"

"The bill. Didn't you promise to pay my expenses while I was in New York?"

"My dear sir," was the retort, "I deny everything, and insist upon proof."

The lawyer paid the bill and laughingly said: "You need no further advice from me."

◆

The Winner.

While Chopin probably did not time his "Minute Waltz" to exactly sixty seconds, some auditors insist that it lives up to its name. Mme. Theodora Sturkow Ryder on one of her tours played the "Minute Waltz" as an encore, first telling her audience what it [illegible]. Thereupon a huge man in a large riding suit took out an immense [illegible] watch, held it open almost under her nose, and gravely proceeded to time her. The pianist's fingers flew along the keys, [illegible] her anxiety was rewarded when [illegible] closed the watch with a loud slap and said in a booming voice: "Gosh! She done it."

◆

Timely.

The evening lesson was from the Book of Job, and the minister had just read, "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out," when immediately the church was in total darkness.

"Brethren," said the minister, with scarcely a moment's pause, "in view of the sudden and startling fulfillment of this prophecy we will spend a few minutes in silent prayer for the electric lighting company."

CUPID'S ARROW OF 1917.

A quick little, slick little
Shot well sent
From a U. S. gun by a
U. S. gent

A bubble of oil,
A swirl of sea
Regards to "Bill" of
Germany.

◆

Smarty!

A full-blown second lieutenant was endeavoring to display his great knowledge of musketry. Sauntering up to the latest recruit, he said:

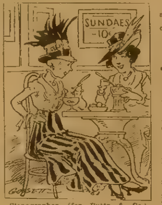
"See here, my man, this thing is a rifle, this is the barrel, this is the butt, and this is where you put the cartridge in."

The recruit seemed to be taking it all in, so the officer, continuing, said:

"You put the weapon to your shoulder; these little things on the barrel are called sights; then to fire you pull this little thing, which is called the trigger. Now smarten yourself up, and remember what I have told you; and, by the way, what trade did you follow before you enlisted? A collier, I suppose?"

"No, sir," came the reply, "I only worked as a gunsmith for the Government Small Arms Factory."

◆



Stenographer (for Butts & Co.)—"What a nerve some men have got! Right after dictating a letter to his banker sayin' he can't possibly make up his overdraft Butts asks me to marry him."

◆

Quite Likely.

"Listen to this, Maria," said Mr. Stubb, as he unfolded his scientific paper. "This article states that in some of the old Roman prisons that have been unearthed they found the petrified remains of the prisoners."

"Gracious, John," exclaimed Mrs. Stubb with a smile, "them's what they call hardened criminals, I expect."

◆

At Sunday School.

"Give an account of Balaam," said the teacher.

"Balaam was a prophet who lived a long way off," replied the student. "After a while he went out for a ride on his donkey, and he got very angry with the donkey and hit him, and a voice from Heaven said, 'You must not hit the donkey, it is holy ground.'"

◆

Making it Worse

"Did you try counting sheep for your insomnia?"

"Yes, but it only made matters worse—the sheep reminded me of my butcher's bill."

◆

So, She Nagged Some More.

Mrs. Nag—"I'm not myself at all this morning."

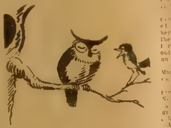
Mr. N.—"Then we'll have a good time."

The High Bed.

"My!" said Mrs. Comler, inspecting her friend's house, "why do you have such a high bed for your little boy?"

"So we can hear him if he falls out," replied Mrs. Housler. "You have no idea what heavy sleepers my husband and I are."

◆



The Early Bird—"Hello, hooter. What do you think of this more daylight scheme?"

The Owl—"Rotten. What we really need is more darkness."

◆

Contradictory.

"Society," said the plumber, "is surely a wonderful institution."

"What's wonderful about it?" the thin carpenter demanded.

"Manners and customs."

"What do you know about manners?"

"I was thinking about the Umsons."

"What about the Umsons?"

"I heard a friend ask him if he usually dressed for dinner."

"Yes."

"And Umson said he did."

"What's odd about that?"

"Only a day or so ago Umson talked with [illegible]"

"He did?"

"Yes, and I remember distinctly that he told me he preferred his meats without dressing."

◆

A Noo Yawk Bank Director.

A Buffalo man stopped a newsboy in New York, saying: "See here, son, I want to find the Blank National Bank. I'll give you half a dollar if you direct me to it."

With a grin the boy replied: "All right, come along," and he led the man to a building half a block away.

The man paid the promised fee, remarking, however: "That was half a dollar easily earned."

"Sure!" responded the lad. "But you mustn't fergit that bank directors is paid high in Noo Yawk."

◆

Uneasy.

The local pawnbroker's shop was on fire, and among the crowd of spectators was an old woman who attracted much attention by her sobs and cries of despair.

"What is the matter with you?" a fireman said. "You don't own the shop, do you?"

"No," she wailed, "but my old man's suit is pawned there, and he don't know it."

◆

Willing to Experiment.

The sewing machine agent rang the bell. A particularly noisy and vicious looking bulldog assisted in opening the door. The dog stood his ground. The agent retreated slightly.

"Will that dog bite?" he asked.

"We don't quite know yet," the lady said. "We have only just got him. But we are trying him with strangers. Won't you come in?"

◆

Germ Proof.

"We drank from the same canteen," exclaimed the old soldier, ruminating.

"But wasn't you afraid of the microbes?" suggested his granddaughter.

"Gee! No microbes could live in the stuff we was drinkin', child!"

No Good.

[illegible]

A Wife's Liabilities.

It happened at a Christmas party. A pretty young lady had asked one of the male guests to pass a dish of almonds and raisins.

"With pleasure," he replied, "but do you know that what you have asked for is called in the vernacular 'Kissmiss,' and that the penalty of a kiss attaches to the request?"

"Is that so?" answered the lady, calmly. "I must consult my husband." And she called across the room to him, and repeated the observation.

"Quite so," he replied. "According to custom it is a just debt and must be paid. But is the gentleman aware of the arrangement made when we were married—that I must settle all my wife's liabilities."

◆

When Jeopardy Left.

"We once had a servant-girl whom we nicknamed 'Jeopardy' because she could not be prevented from pouring kerosene directly from the can upon a lighted fire." Thus runs one account in Hudson Maxim's "Dynamite Stories." "One day Jeopardy left us very suddenly, and she never came back. We were sorry she left, as Jeopardy was a good girl. It developed that she had chanced to find a fifty-pound case of dynamite-sticks in the woodshed, which she had been using to start the fire in the kitchen stove. Sometimes dynamite will work all right for such a purpose, but it is notional stuff and cannot be depended upon merely to burn. It was during one of those intervals that Jeopardy went."

◆

Don't All Answer at Once.

James O Baldwin, husky lad, wants to marry very bad. He is 50, 6 feet, strong; lived in Jersey City long. Suitable wife not to be had, so he sends out this little ad:

"Wanted—Wife to clean and scrub, mend my socks and cook the grub. Must be handsome, bright and gay, 32 if she's a day. Widow woman not deterred—one kid, maybe, none preferred. She must have some cash to spend, an intellect with learned trend. She must be a music lover; fond of me, and nary other. That is what my wife must be—lum-te-dum-te-deedle-dee."

◆

Poor Little Boy.

"Are there any marks by which he can be identified?" asked the police superintendent, preparatory to telegraphing.

"No," said the father of the boy who had run away from home to fight Indians, "but there will be when I get hold of him again."

◆

When the Preacher Calls.

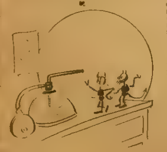
"Is your mamma in?"

"What's your name?"

"I'm Mr. Whiteband, the new minister."

"Then I think mamma's expecting you, 'cause she said she'd bet a shillin' you'd be sure to come on washing day."

◆



Germ—"There's the thing they shoot poisonous gases at us with, Bill. The diabolical ingenuity of these humans is frightful."

A PROBLEM IN SMOKES.

I hear tell
That the mortality
Among cigars
Carried in the vest pockets
By single men
Is three thousand per cent more
Than in the same articles
Carried in the same position
By married men.

◆

Cause of Sleeplessness.

At an engineer's shop in the East the proprietor prided himself on having one man upon whom he could rely for being punctual to his time. Just recently he has fallen from this habit, and on several occasions has been late.

He was behind time a few mornings ago and the proprietor called him into the office.

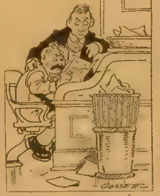
"Can't you manage to get here at your time, James, as you used to do?" he said.

"I can't sleep at nights now, sir, and it makes me late sometimes, but I will try and alter it," replied the man.

"If it is sleeplessness you suffer from, James, why don't you consult a doctor and find out the cause?"

"Oh, I know the cause, sir, it is 6 weeks old."

◆



"After two years in the trenches my brother Alphonse has just been badly hurt."

"How?"

He thoughtlessly stepped out of the trench and was hit by an automobile."

◆

Grateful to the Doctor.

A Chinaman was asked if there were good doctors in China.

"Good doctors!" he exclaimed. "China have best doctors in world. Hang Chang one good doctor, he great, save life, to me."

"You don't say so! How was that?"

"Me velly bad," he said. "Me callee Doctor Han Kon. Give some medicine. Get velly, velly ill. Me callee Doctor Sa Sing. Give more medicine. Me glow worse—go die. Blimebly callee Doctor Hang Chang. He got no time, no come. Save life."

◆

Only One of His Kind.

Johnnie Jones was doing penance in the corner. Presently he thought aloud pensively.

"I can't help it if I'm not perfect," he sighed. "I have only heard of one perfect boy in my whole life."

"Who was that?" his father asked, thinking to point out a moral.

"You," came the reply, plaintively, "when you were little."

◆

Boom in African Trade.

"The wrist watch has done much for our trade."

"Where is your trade?"

"It is mainly in Africa. Formerly we couldn't [illegible] natives [illegible] because [illegible] wore no pockets to carry it in."

A Sad Christmas.

Jones was miserable. There he was alone, damp and unhappy, eating his Christmas dinner in the coffee-room of a woebegone and lonely inn.

Jones' motto has always been "Business before pleasure," but he wished he had shirked the business which had summoned him to this part of the country at Christmastide. He dozed for a while, and then in desperation betook himself to bed. He was awakened by the pattering of rain and to his disgust he found water dripping onto the bed thru the ceiling.

He pulled the bell savagely, and after a lapse of time some one condescended to answer it.

"You must find me another room, please," said Jones. "The rain is leaking in like fury."

"Oh, is that all you are bothering about?" snarled the landlady's voice. "If you'd thought to look you'd have found an umbrella under the bed. Use it, man."

◆

Frugal to the End

Not long ago a certain publication had an idea. Its editor made up a list of thirty men and women distinguished in art, religion, literature, commerce, politics, and other lines, and to each he sent a letter or a telegram containing this question: "If you had but forty-eight hours more to live, how would you spend them?" his purpose being to embody the replies in a symposium in a subsequent issue of his periodical.

Among those who received copies of the inquiry was a New York writer. He thought the proposition over for a spell and then sent back the truthful answer by wire, collect:

"One at a time."

◆

Not Much to Talk About.

There was an explosion of one of the big guns on a battleship not long ago. Shortly afterward one of the sailors who was injured was asked by a reporter to give an account of it.

"Well, sir," rejoined the jacky, "it was like this. You see, I was standin' with me back to the gun, a-facin' the port [illegible]. All of a sudden I hears a hell of a noise; then, sir, the ship physician, he says 'Set up an' take this.'"

◆

What's the Use?

"I think it's awfully silly to hang up a sprig of mistletoe during the Christmas holidays," we remarked.

"Yes," replied the sweet young thing, "and so utterly unnecessary."

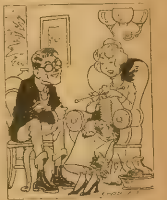
The Joke Recoiled.

Riggs (facetiously)—"This is a picture of my wife's former husband."

Diggs—"Silly-looking geezer! But say, I didn't know your wife was married before she met you."

Riggs—"She wasn't. This is a picture of myself when I was [illegible]"

◆



[illegible] nd the skull of a [illegible] man 20,000 years old.

[illegible] horrid of [illegible]

[illegible]

◆

Out of Her Hands.

She was surprised when she heard of the engagement, and she showed it.

"Why, I was perfectly sure that you liked Tom better than George," she [illegible]

"Well, to tell the truth, I did," replied the girl.

"But you say you are engaged to George?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't understand it at all."

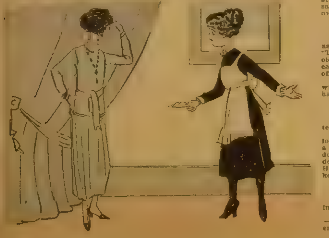
"Why, you see, George was the one who proposed."

◆

Do You Blame Her?

"Great gracious, man!" exclaimed Boggs' friend. "Do I find you reduced to playing a cornet at the street corner to make a living?"

"I'm not doing this to make a living. My wife won't let me practice in the house," Boggs replied.

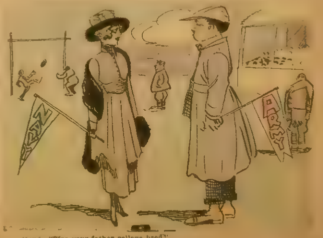


[illegible] a political candidate in the front yard, mum, who wants to kiss the ba[illegible]

"Tell him there is no baby, and, Susan——"

"Yes, me lady."

"[illegible]'t you dare let the horrid creature kiss Fido."



Maud—"Was your father college bred?"

[illegible]—"Yes, but we never mention it. The college he went to had a rotten football team."

How They Felt About It.

THE woman who was finishing the army sweater clicked her needles sharply. "I just can't stand," she announced, "my son Richard's being engaged! No, she's a dear girl and I like her and I perfectly approve of the match and I want Richard to be married, and I'm going to be an ideal mother-in-law, so much so that they will put up monuments to me and get out extras telling of my virtues!

"What I simply cannot endure is Richard's attitude! You'd think that he is the only young man on this green earth who ever got engaged, and there never was another girl like Sue and nobody ever was able to be as ideally happy as they are going to be!"

"Oh, is that all?" commented the woman knitting a trench cap. "Wait till he begins to tell you how to run your house and wait until he begins to quote his darling's words of wisdom! Perhaps she has made fudge three times in her life and taken abstracted notes at a cooking class, mixing them up with her shopping list—he'll tell you what she says in regard to the proper method of balancing a meal, with calories on one side and proteids on the other, and all you can do is to swim up from under and listen!

"They didn't teach you calories, did they, when you learned to cook? And the family has always sworn by your meals, hasn't it, and boasted of mother's doughnuts and unsurpassed pot roast? Huh! Take a back seat! Never shall I forget when my son Henry told me that mince pie was unbalancing my menu for dinner after his loved one had told him when you ate mince pie you needed nothing else but a lettuce salad! And then he ate two pieces, besides a fair [illegible] of everything else I had!"

"I'll not have it!" declared the woman knitting the sweater. "I don't care if Richard is 21—he's got to behave himself! Just now he is in that beatific, foolish stage where the clouds are bright pink and he condescendingly pities the rest of the world'

"'Oh, of course,' Richard says in effect, 'I know that once you were my age and engaged and all that, but nobody as prosaic as you and my father ever could have had this delightful experience! Of course, you're my mother and there's nobody like you—still you never could have been as wonderful when you were 20 as Sue is, and, therefore, father couldn't have been as crazy about you!'

"'Certainly dad tells of riding twenty miles to see you for fifteen minutes when it was 30 below zero, but a man's memory becomes treacherous as he grows older. He probably took a Pullman and had [illegible] in that direction, anyhow. If there wasn't a railroad he no doubt built one. He's always building them now.

"'Sue is so much more brilliant mentally, with all her beauty, than girls were then. Why, she knows as much about housekeeping now as you do after all these years. She knows exactly how many calories there are in a beefsteak and why pie crust is injurious. She says she knows she can get thru all her housekeeping in two hours, thus having time to devote to more broadening things, instead of puttering around. Why don't you get Sue to explain her system to you, mother?'

"Well, no, he hasn't exactly dared to come out and say all this in words of one syllable, but he's hinted around rather too transparently. I shall certainly spank him if he ever dares to voice his turbulent sentiments. At that I'll warrant the beefsteak will be like burned leather even if they have a speaking acquaintance with its calories!

"And every evening I can see, when he comes down from upstairs, all fixed up to make his visit to Sue, that he is mentally shaking his head at his father and me, seated on either side of the library table. 'Sad,' he tells himself. 'Separated by the width of a table, yet they are a thousand miles apart! They don't even sit gazing at each other, and dad will not speak for an hour and a half til he finishes that paper he's reading. And mother sits knitting, not even thinking about him! Well, why should she think about him? He has on [illegible] slippers and a wretched tie and he [illegible] a haircut and I'll bet he [illegible] tonight! Awful sight! I wonder why mother doesn't fix her hair like Sue's and have some class to it? Discouraging all around.'

"Then Richard will smile dutifully, say 'Good night' in that sad, pitying way and depart—and his father and I look briefly at each other and grin. He's read Richard's mind, too. That's the only thing that makes life bearable—John sees it just as I do!"

"Well," said the woman with the trench cap, "I suppose if we will wait twenty-five years we'll have our revenge! Our sons and their wives will be writhing under the condescension of their sons!"

WOMEN SUFFERERS MAY NEED SWAMP-ROOT

Thousands upon thousands of women have kidney and bladder trouble and never suspect it.

Women's complaints often prove to be nothing else but kidney trouble, or the result of kidney or bladder disease.

If the kidneys are not in a healthy condition, they may cause the other organs to become diseased.

Pain in the back, headache, loss of ambition, nervousness, are often times symptoms of kidney trouble.

Don't delay starting treatment. Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, a physician's prescription, obtained at any drug store, may be just the remedy needed to overcome such conditions.

Get a medium or large size bottle immediately from any drug store.

However, if you wish first to test this great preparation send ten cents to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., for a sample bottle. When writing be sure and mention the Chicago Ledger.

A COUNTRY GARDEN.

Hollyhocks and larkspur,
  Color everywhere.
Warm and still and fragrant
  Breathes the sunny air.
Pinks and tiger lilies,
  Yellow marigold,
Candituft and coxcomb,
  Roses manifold.
Hollyhocks and larkspur,
  Scarlet, crimson, blue.
Sunshine all around, dear,
  Butterflies—and you!

—Anna Bird Stewart.

* * *

Hopeless Tasks.

"YOU might travel all day on a [illegible] horse," said Gosling, "and not find a man in Jack Stingo's class for complete worthlessness. If he has any redeeming features he keeps them so well concealed you'd need a search warrant to locate them.

"[illegible] Jessie Twaddle is going to marry [illegible] at high noon one of these days, and Jessie is as fine as silk. I'd like to have nineteen daughters just like her, I admire her so much. And she is going to marry that cheap skate with the idea of reforming him. She might [illegible] to reform the village dump by [illegible] water on it. Such a misfit marriage makes me sore."

"Yet there is nothing an innocent bystander can do," mournfully confessed Jimuelson. "We see the lamb to the slaughter led, and we can't do anything but stand around and cuss the Government. It's a curious thing that human beings positively refuse to learn anything from the experience of others. They must pile up a lot of their own experience at a frightful cost, before they get wise.

"If Jessie Twaddle would look around and consult her elders she'd find many instances where girls married four flushers to reform them, and I doubt whether she'd find one instance where the [illegible] worked out. But every girl thinks they are going to be different where she is personally concerned.

"And here I stand moralizing over the frailties and foolishness of others, and I'm such a blamed chump myself I ought to have a police bodyguard to keep me out of mischief

"You doubtless have noticed that I am wearing my hat sideways today. That's because I have a lump about the size of an ostrich egg just above my brow. And I have that lump, which aches and throbs most disgustingly, because I haven't sense enough to profit from the experience of others.

"If Jessie Twaddle came along and learned the sickening details, she'd probably say I ought to know that no sane man will take the part of peacemaker when a husband and wife begin throwing priceless china and bric-a-brac at each other.

"Mr. and Mrs. Alum live next door to me, and their frequent wrangles have distressed me very much.

"This morning they cast aside all restraints and chased each other around their vine-covered cottage, throwing domestic utensils whatnots and all kinds of portable household furniture. Had I been as wise as I'd have other people be, I'd have paid no attention, for I have knitting of my own that demands attention.

"But I must go over and make a remonstrance, like a bejiggered idiot, and Mrs. Alum smote me on the dome with a flowerpot, while her husband pelted me in the small of the back with a bootjack.

"In view of which I beg leave to retract any remarks I have made concerning the fatuous folly of others."

* * *

The Wedding Gift.

"THE manager has married," began the brown-eyed typist, "and it's up to us to hand him a wedding present."

"Nothing doing," exclaimed the stock boy. "If I'd get married tomorrow I bet you that gink wouldn't slip ten cents into a fund to make my little bride happy. I know what he is. Why, three weeks ago, when I had a few matrimonial notions myself, I spoke to him about it and he advised me against the move. Asked me how in the world I would expect to support a wife and live happily forever after on my ten beans a week. Wasn't that a fine way to kill a feller's happiness? No, Miss Mahoney, my name don't go on no list for his wedding present."

"Then your name shall be omitted, James," said the switchboard operator. "But take care, my boy! Mr. Wilkins is very sentimental about his wedding, and if he ever thought you didn't give at least a jitney toward his present your job wouldn't be worth two cents' worth of liver for the cat."

"Don't care if it wouldn't be," replied the insurgent stock boy. "He took all the joy out of life with his kind advice on the little wedding for two I was going to have. It makes no difference to me whether I'm hired or fired. I've lost out and the world to me looks the same color as my mother's bluing."

"If I may intrude," spoke up the elderly bookkeeper, "I would offer the suggestion that we simply extend our congratulations to Mr. Wilkins in the form of writing. I can engross a card that can hardly be told from genuine engravings, and it can contain our names and wishes for a long life of marital happiness. We must, young people, consider the times. Things are very high at present."

"Well, ain't you the economical thing!" ejaculated the brown-eyed typist, giving a cutting glance at the elderly bookkeeper. "But you can't work that be-thrifty-and-save advice in this office just now. We've got to show Mr. Wilkins that we're human. And we've got to consider what his new little bride will think of us. If I were she and the office force of my husband held out on my wedding present—well, there'd be a new force, that's all!

"Listen, girls! That bookkeeper thinks of nothing but saving for his old age. That's up to him. And as for Benny, the stock boy, being heartbroken for life because Mr. Wilkins was kind enough to tell him you can hardly keep a pair of canaries these days on ten [illegible], all I can say is that when Benny gets a few weeks older he'll have more sense and see the Wilkins wisdom. I'm going to head the wedding present list with a dollar."

"Same here," said the operator.

"Enter me for the same amount," added the elderly bookkeeper.

"Ditto!" exclaimed Benny, the stock boy. "Maybe old Wilkins was right. And, besides, I don't exactly want to get married, now that I think it over, until this draft business is settled."

* * *

Hard to Tell.

"Pa, were you rich when mamma married you?"

"No, my dear."

"Well, papa, what was it, then, do you think, that mamma married you for?"

The Time Has Come to Deal With Corns in a Scientific Way
This Man's Methods
Not This Man's

Let An Expert Deal With Corns

Ask who makes it before you use a method for ending corns.

Harsh methods are not sanctioned now. Mussy methods are unnecessary. Soreness never need occur.

Blue-jay was invented by a chemist of high repute. It is made by a concern of world-wide fame as a maker of surgical dressings. Its action is gentle and results are sure. It acts on the corn alone, not on the healthy tissue.

Apply it as you wrap a cut finger. That ends all pain, all discomfort. In two days the corn disappears. Sometimes an old, tough corn needs a second application. But no corn can resist this method. It is sure to go.

Millions of people know this. At the first sign of a corn they apply a Blue-jay. Corn pains never bother them.

You will always do likewise when you see the results. One trial will convince you. It means so much, and costs so little, that we urge you to make it now.

Deal with one corn tonight.

B&B Blue-jay Corn Plasters
Stop Pain Instantly
End Corns Completely
25c Packages at Druggists

BAUER & BLACK *Makers of Surgical Dressings, Etc.* Chicago and New York

How Blue-jay Acts

A is a thin, soft pad which stops the pain by relieving the pressure.

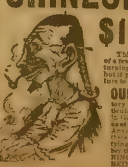
B is the B&B wax, which gently undermines the corn. Usually it takes only 48 hours to end the corn completely.

C is rubber adhesive which sticks without wetting. It wraps around the toe and makes the plaster snug and comfortable.

Blue-jay is applied in a jiffy. After that, one doesn't feel the corn. The action is gentle, and applied to the corn alone. So the corn disappears without soreness.

CHINESE PRIZE PUZZLE

$100.00 IN GOLD GIVEN



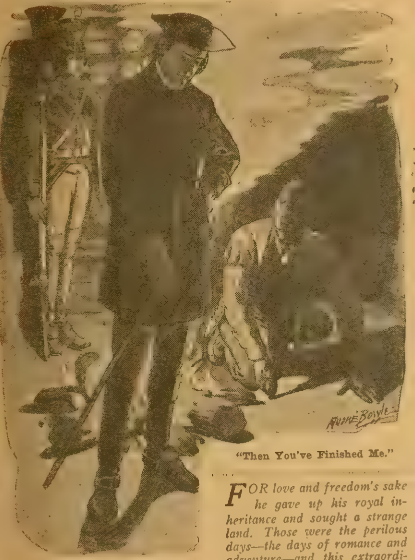
This picture shows a "chink" doing his daily wash. In this picture are the faces of a few of his customers—these faces can be discovered by a little figuring and by turning and twisting the picture in various positions. It looks easy and simple, but if you can find as many as two faces, mark them with an X and return the picture to us and we will send you FREE and POSTPAID A BIG PRIZE PACKAGE.

OUR OFFER We are the largest magazine publishers in the west and are conducting this big club in connection with our big introductory and advertising campaign and want to send you sample copies and full particulars as to how you can become a member of this club and share in the $100.00 in Gold and thousands of other valuable premiums. **Does not cost you a single cent to join the club, and positively every club member wins a premium.** Anyone may enter, and bear in mind, there is absolutely no chance to lose. If there should be a tie between two or more contestants for any of the prizes, each tying contestant will receive the prize tied for. **NOTICE!** Every new club member this month also receives a beautiful GENUINE GOLD FILLED SIGNET RING, GUARANTEED FOR 5 YEARS FREE AND EXTRA, JUST FOR BEING PROMPT. Get your share of this $100.00. Write TODAY.

CHINESE PUZZLE CLUB, 281 CAPPER BLDG., TOPEKA, KANSAS

Lazarre, the Lost King

By Mary Hartwell Catherwood



"Then You've Finished Me."

FOR love and freedom's sake he gave up his royal inheritance and sought a strange land. Those were the perilous days—the days of romance and adventure—and this extraordinary story is replete with thrills. It was begun in No. 42, October 20, and if you wish to read the story which has gone before, subscriptions may begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news dealers, our agents or by mail direct from the office of publication.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

"WHERE did you get this?" I heard myself asking, a strange voice sounding far down the throat.

"From an Indian," the mystic told me quietly. "He said it was bad medicine to him. He never had any luck in hunting after it fell to his share, so he was glad to give it to me."

"Where did he get it?"

"His tribe took it from some prisoners they killed."

I was running blindly around in a circle to find relief from the news he dealt me, when the absurdity of such news overtook me. I stood and laughed.

"Who were the prisoners?"

"I don't know," answered Johnny Appleseed.

"How do you know the Indians killed them?"

"The one that gave me this book told me so."

"There are plenty of padlocked books in the world," I said jauntily. "At least there must be more than one. How long ago did it happen?"

"Not very long ago, I think; for the book was clean."

"Give it to me," I said, as if cursing him.

"It's a sacred book," he answered, hesitating.

"Maybe it's sacred. Let me see."

"There may be holy mysteries in it, to be read only of him who has the key."

"I have a key!"

I took it out of the snuffbox. Johnny Appleseed fixed his rapt eyes on the little object in my fingers.

"Mebby you are the one appointed to open and read what is sealed!"

"No, I'm not! How could my key fit a padlocked book that belonged to prisoners killed by the Indians?"

He held it out to me and I took hold of the padlock. It was a small steel padlock, and the hole looked dangerously the size of my key.

"I can't do it!" I said.

"Let me try," said Johnny Appleseed.

"No! You might break my key in a strange padlock! Hold it still, Johnny. Please don't shake it."

"I'm not shaking it," Johnny Appleseed answered tenderly.

"There's only one way of proving that my key doesn't fit," I said, and thrust it in. The ward turned easily, and the padlock came away in my hand. I dropped it and opened the book. Within the lid a name was written which I had conned a thousand times —"Eagle Madeleine Marie de Ferrier."

Still I did not believe it. Nature protects us in our uttermost losses by a density thru which conviction is slow to penetrate. In some mysterious way the padlocked book had fallen into strange hands, and had been carried to America.

"If Eagle were in America, I should know it. For De Chaumont would know it, and Skenedonk would find it out."

I stooped for the padlock, hooked it in place, and locked the book again.

"Is the message to you alone?" inquired Johnny Appleseed.

"Did you ever care for a woman?" I asked him.

Restless misery came into his eyes, and I noticed for the first time that he was not an old man; he could not have been above 35. He made no answer; shifting from one bare foot to the other, his body settling and losing its Indian lightness.

"A woman gave me the key to this book. Her name is written inside the lid. I was to read it if it ever fell into my hands, after a number of years. Somebody has stolen it, and carried it among the Indians. But it's mine. Every shilling in my wallet, the clothes off my back you're welcome to——"

"I don't want your money or your clothes."

"But let me give you something in exchange for it."

"What do I need? I always have as much as I want. This is a serviceable coat, as good as any man need wish for; and the ravens feed me. And if I needed anything, could I take it for carrying a message? I carry good tidings of great joy among the people all the time. This is yours. Put it in your pocket."

I hid the padlocked book in the breast of my coat, and seized his wrist and his hand.

"Be of good courage, white double-man," said Johnny Appleseed. "The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you peace!"

He returned to his side of the fire and stretched himself under the stars, and I went to Croghan's quarters and lay down with my clothes on in the bunk assigned to me.

The book which I would have rent open at 20 I now carried unsealed. The suspense of it was so sweet, and drew my thoughts from the other suspense which could not be endured. It was not likely that any person about Mont-Louis had stolen the book, and wandered so far. Small as the volume was, the boards indented my breast and made me increasingly conscious of its presence. I waked in the night and held it.

Next morning Johnny Appleseed was gone from the fort, unafraid of war, bent only on carrying the apple of civilization into the wilderness. Nobody spoke about his absence, for shells began to fall around us. The British and Indians were in sight; and General Proctor sent a flag of truce demanding sur-

Major Croghan's ensign approached the messenger with a flag in reply.

The women gathered their children as chickens under shelter. All in the fort were cheerful, and the men joked with the gush of humor which danger starts in Americans.

Major Croghan and I watched the parley from one of the blockhouses that bastioned the place. Before it ended a Shawanoe sprang out of a ravine and snatched the ensign's sword. He gave it back reluctantly, and the British flag bearer hurried the American within the gate.

General Proctor regretted that so fine a young man as Major Croghan should fall into the hands of savages, who were not to be restrained.

"When this fort is taken," said Croghan, on hearing the message, "there will be nobody left in it to kill."

British gunboats drawn up on the Sandusky River, and a howitzer on the shore, opened fire, and cannonaded all day with the poor execution of long range artillery. The northwestern angle of the fort was their target. Croghan foresaw that the enemy's intention was to make a breach and enter there. When night came again, his one six-pounder was moved with much labor from that angle into the southwest blockhouse, as noiselessly as possible. He masked the embrasure and had the piece loaded with a double charge of slugs and grapeshot and half a charge of powder. Perhaps the British thought him unprovided with any heavy artillery.

They were busy themselves, bringing three of the ineffectual six-pounders and the howitzer, under darkness, within two hundred and fifty yards of the fort; giving a background of woods to their battery. About dawn we saw what they had been doing. They concentrated on the northwest angle; and still Croghan replied only with muskets, waiting for them to storm.

So it went on all day, the gun-proof blockhouse enduring its bombardment, and smoke thickening until it filled the stockade as water fills a well, and settled like fog between us and the enemy. An attack was made on the southern angle where the cannon was masked.

"This is nothing but a feint," Croghan said to the younger officers.

While that corner replied with musketry, he kept a sharp lookout for the safety of the northwest blockhouse.

One soldier was brought down the ladder and carried thru the murky pall to the surgeon, who could do nothing for him. Another turned from a loophole with blood upon him, laughing at his mishap. For the grotesqueness and inconvenience of a wound are sometimes more swiftly felt than its pain. He came back presently with his shoulder bandaged and resumed his place at the loophole.

The exhilaration of that powder atmosphere and its heat made soldiers throw off their coats, as if the expanding human body was not to be confined in wrappings.

In such twilight of war the twilight of Nature overtook us. Another feint was made to draw a[illegible] from a heavy force of assailants [illegible] in twenty paces, under c[illegible] to surprise the northwest blockhouse.

Musketry was directed against them; they hesitated. The commander led a charge, and himself sprang into the first ditch. We saw the fine fellows leap [illegible] to carry the blockhouse, every [illegible] determined to be first in making a bre[illegible]. They filled the ditch.

This was the instant for which Croghan had waited. He opened th[illegible] hole and unmasked his exactly [illegible] cannon. It enfiladed the [illegible] sweeping them at a distanc[illegible] feet; slugs and grapeshot hissed, spreading fan rays of death! By the flash of the reloaded six-pounder we saw the trench filled with dead and wounded.

The besiegers turned.

Croghan's sweating gunners swabbed and loaded and fired, roaring like lions.

The Indians, of whom there were nearly a thousand, were not in the charge, and when retreat began they went in panic. We could hear calls and yells, the clatter of arms, and a thumping of the earth; the strain of men tugging cannon ropes, the swift withdrawal of a routed force.

Two thousand more Indians, approaching under Tecumseh, were turned back by refugees.

Croghan remarked, as we listened to the uproar, "Fort Stephenson can hardly be called untenable against heavy artillery."

Then arose cries in the ditch, which penetrated to women's ears. Neither side was able to help the wounded there. But before the rout was complete, Croghan had water let down in buckets to relieve their thirst, and ordered a trench cut under the pickets of the stockade. Thru this the poor wretches who were able to crawl came in and surrendered themselves and had their wounds dressed.

At 3 o'clock in the morning not a British uniform glimmered red thru the dawn. The noise of retreat ended. Pistols and muskets strewed the ground. [illegible] abandoned on the river, [illegible] stores and the [illegible].

"They thought General Harrison was coming," laughed Croghan, as he sat down to an early b[illegible] relieved all the living in the trench and detailed men to bury the dead. "We have lost one man, and have another under the surgeon's hands. Now I'm ready to appear before a court-martial for disobeying orders."

"You mean you're ready for your immortal page in history."

"[illegible]" said Croghan; "and the dislike of poor little boys and girls who will stick their fists in their eyes when they have to learn it at school."

Immense manhood ennobled his long, animated face. The President afterward made him a lieutenant-colonel, and women and his superior officers praised him; but he was never more gallant than when he said:

"My uncle, George Rogers Clark, would have undertaken to hold this fort; and by Heavens, we were bound to try it!"

The other young officers sat at mess with him, hilarious over the outcome, picturing General Proctor's state of mind when he learned the age of his conqueror.

None of them cared a rap that Daniel Webster was opposing the war in the House of Representatives at Washington, and declaring that on land it was a failure.

A subaltern came to the messroom door, touching his cap and asking to speak with Major Croghan.

"The men working outside at the trenches saw a boy come up from the ravine, sir, and fall every few steps, so they've brought him in."

"Does he carry a dispatch?"

"No, sir. He isn't more than 9 or 10 years old. I think he was a prisoner."

"Is he a white boy?"

"Yes, sir, but he's dressed like an Indian."

"I think it unlikely the British would allow the Shawanoes to burden their march with any prisoners."

"Somebody had him, and I'm afraid he's been shot either during the action or in the retreat. He was hid in the ravine."

"Bring him here," said Croghan.

A boy with blue eyes set wide apart, hair clinging brightly and moistly to his pallid forehead, and mouth corners turning up in a courageous smile, entered and stood erect before the officer. He was a well-made little fellow. His tiny buckskin hunting shirt was draped with a sash in the Indian fashion, showing the curve of his naked hip. Down this a narrow line of blood was moving. Children of refugees, full of pity, looked thru the open door behind him.

"Go to him, Shipp," said Croghan, as the boy staggered. But he waved the [illegible]

"[illegible] an?" asked the Major.

"[illegible] answered. "I am the [illegible]

CHAPTER XXIV.

H[illegible] and I was [illegible] Shipp. I set him on my knees, and the surgeon poured a little watered brandy down his throat.

"Paul!" I said to him.

"Stand back," ordered the surgeon, as women followed their children, crowding the room.

"Do you know him, Lazarre?" asked [illegible]

"[illegible] is Madame de Ferrier's child."

"Not the baby I used to see at De Chaumont's? What's he doing at Fort Stephenson?"

The women made up my bunk for Paul, and I laid him in it. Each wanted to take him to her care. The surgeon sent them to the cook-house to brew messes for him, and stripped the child, finding a bullet wound in his side. Probing brought nothing out, [illegible] single question. The child should live. There could be no thought of anything else. While the surgeon dressed and bandaged that small hole like a sucked-in mouth, I saw the boy sitting on saddle-bags behind me, his arms clipping my waist, while we threaded bowers of horse paths. I had not known how I wanted a boy to sit behind me! No wonder pioneer men were so confident and full of jokes; they had children behind them!

He was burning with fever. His eyes swam in it as he looked at me. He could not eat when food was brought to him, but begged for water, and the surgeon allowed him what the women considered reckless quantities. Over stockades came the August rustle of the forest. Morning bird voices succeeded to the cannon's reverberations.

The surgeon turned everybody out but me, and looked in by times from his hospital of British wounded. I wiped the boy's forehead and gave him his medicine, fanning him all day long. He lay in stupor, and the surgeon said he was going comfortably, and would suffer little. Once in a while he turned up the corners of his mouth and smiled at me, as if the opiate gave him blessed sensations. I asked the surgeon what I should do in the night if he came out of it and wanted to talk.

"Let him talk," said the doctor, briefly.

Unlike the night before, this was a night of silence. Everybody slept but the sentinels, and the men whose wounds kept them awake; and I was both sentinel, and a man whose wounds kept him awake.

Paul's little hands were scratched; and there was a stone bruise on the heel he pushed from cover of the blankets. His small body, compact of so much manliness, was fine and sweet. Tho he bore no resemblance to his mother, it seemed to me that she lay there for me to tend; and the change was no more an astounding miracle than the change of baby to boy.

I had him all that night for my own, putting every other thought out of mind and absorbing his presence. His forehead and his face lost their burning heat with the coolness of dawn, which blew our shaded candle, flowing from miles of fragrant oaks.

He awoke and looked all around the cabin. I tried to put his opiate into his mouth; but something restrained me. I held his hand to my cheek.

"I like you," he spoke out. "Don't you think my mother is pretty?"

I said I thought his mother was the most beautiful woman in the world. He curled up his mouth corners and gave me a blue-eyed smile.

"My father is not pretty. But he is a gentleman of France."

"Where are they, Paul?"

He turned a look upon me without answering.

"Paul," I said brutally, "tell me where your father and mother are."

He was so far gone that my voice recalled him. He simply knew me as a voice and a presence that he liked.

"With poor old Ernestine," he answered.

"And where is poor old Ernestine?"

He began to shake as if struck with a chill. I drew the blanket closer.

"Paul, you must tell me!"

He shook his head. His mouth worked, and his little breast went into convulsions.

He shrieked and threw himself toward me. "My pretty little mother!"

I held him still in a tight grip. "My darling—don't start your wound!"

I could have beaten myself, but the surgeon afterward told me the child was dying when he came into the fort. About dawn, when men's lives sink to their lowest ebb with night, his sank away. I smoothed his head and kissed and quieted him. Once he looked into space with blurred eyes, and curled up his mouth corners when I am sure he no longer saw me.

Thus swiftly ended Paul's unaccountable appearance at the fort. It was like the falling of a slain bird out of the sky at my feet. The women were tender with his little body. They cried over him as they washed him for burial. The children went outside the stockade and brought green boughs and August wild flowers, bearing the early autumn colors of gold and scarlet. With these they bedded the child in his plank coffin, unafraid of his waxen sleep.

Before Croghan went to report to his General, he asked me where we should bury the little fellow.

"In the fort, by the southern block-house," I answered. "Let Fort Stephenson be his monument. It will stand here forever. The woods around it will be trampled by prowling savages, and later on by prowling white men. Within, nothing will obliterate the place. Give a little fellow a bed here, who died between two countries, and will never be a citizen of either."

"I don't want to make a graveyard of the fort," said Croghan. But he looked at Paul, bent low over him, and allowed him to be buried near the southwest angle.

There the child's bones rest to this day. The town of Fremont in the commonwealth of Ohio has grown up around them. Young children who climb the grassy bastion may walk above his head, never guessing that a little gentleman of France, who died like a soldier of his wound, lies deeply cradled there.

Before throwing myself down in the dead heaviness which results from continual loss of sleep, I questioned the wounded British soldiers about Paul. None of them had seen him. Straggling bands of Indians continually joined their force. Captives were always a possibility in the savage camp. Paul might have been taken hundreds of miles away.

But I had the padlocked book, which might tell the whole story. With desperate haste that could hardly wait to open the lids, I took it out, wondering at the patience which long self-restraint had bred in me. I was very tired, and stretched my arms across the pillow where Paul's head had lain, to rest one instant. But I must have slept. My hand woke first, and feeling itself empty, grasped at the book. It was gone, and so was the sun.

I got a light and searched, thrusting my arm between the bunk and the log wall. It was not on the floor, or in my breast pocket, or in my saddlebags.

The robbery was unendurable. And I knew the Indian who had done it. He was the quietest, most stubborn Oneida that ever followed an adopted white man. Why he had taken the book I could not understand. But I was entirely certain that he had taken it out of my hand while I slept. He would not break the padlock and read it, but like a judicious father he would take care of a possibly unwholesome volume himself.

I went out and found the bald-headed and well-beloved wretch. He was sitting with his knees to his chin by the evening log fire.

"Skenedonk," I said, "I want my book."

"Children and books make a woman of you," he responded. "You had enough books at Longmeadow."

"I want it at once," I repeated.

"It's sorcery," he answered.

"It's a letter from Madame de Ferrier, and may tell where she is."

His fawn eyes were startled, but he continued to hug his knees.

"Skenedonk, I can't quarrel with you. You were my friend before I could remember. When you know I am so bound to you, how can you deal me a deadly hurt?"

"White woman sorcery is the worst sorcery. You thought I never saw it. But I did see it. You went after her to Paris. You did not think of being the King. So you had to come back with nothing. That's what woman sorcery does. Now you have power with the tribes. The President sees you are a big man! And she sends a book to you to bewitch you! I knew she sent the book as soon as I saw it."

"Do you think she sent Paul?"

He made no answer.

"Madame de Ferrier does not know I have the book."

"You haven't it," said Skenedonk.

"But you have."

"If she wrote and sent a letter she expected it would be received."

"When I said a letter I meant what is called a journal: the writing down of what happens daily. Johnny Appleseed got the book from an Indian. That is how it was sent to me."

"If you read it you will want to drop everything else and go to find her."

This was the truth, for I was not under military law.

"Where is the book?"

"Down my back," said Skenedonk.

I felt the loose buckskin.

"It isn't there."

"In my front," said Skenedonk.

I ran my hand over his chest, finding nothing but bone and brawn.

"There it is," he said, pointing to a curled wisp of board at the edge of the fire. "I burnt it."

"Then you've finished me."

I turned and left him sitting like an image by the fire.

CHAPTER XXV.

BEFORE I left Fort Stephenson, I wrote a letter to Count de Chaumont, telling him about Paul's death and asking for news of the De Ferriers. The answer I begged him to send to Sandusky, which the British now despaired of taking. But altho Skenedonk made a long journey for it twice during the half year, I got no answer.

The dangerous work of the next few months became like a long debauch. Awake, we were dodging betwixt hostile tribes, or dealing with those inclined to peace. Asleep, I was too exhausted to dream. It was a struggle of the white force of civilization with the red sense of justice. I wrestled with Algonquin dialects as I had wrestled with Greek. Ottawas and Chippewas, long friendly to the French, came more readily than other tribes to agreement with Americans.

Wherever I went I pushed the quest that was uppermost in my mind, but without finding any trace of Madame de Ferrier.

From the measure constantly taken betwixt other men of my time and myself, this positive knowledge resulted.

In spite of the fact that many treated me as a prince, I found myself an average man. I had no military genius. In argument, persuasive, graceful—even eloquent—were the adjectives applied to me; not sweeping and powerful. I should have made a jog-trot King, no better than my uncle of Provence; no worse than my uncle of Artois, who would rather saw wood than reign a constitutional monarch, and whom the French people afterward turned out to saw wood. My reign might have been neat; it would never have been gaudily splendid. As an average man, I could well hold my own in the world.

Perry on the Lakes, General Jackson in the Southwest, Harrison in the West, and Lawrence on the ocean were pushing the war toward its close; tho as late as spring the National Capitol was burned by the British, and a gentleman whom they gayly called "Old Jimmy Madison," temporarily driven out. But the battle on the little river Thames, in October, settled matters in the Northwest.

The next April, after Leipsic, Napoleon Bonaparte was banished to the island of Elba; and Louis XVIII. passed from his latest refuge at Hartwell House in England, to London; where the Prince Regent honored him and the whole capital cheered him; and thence to Paris, where he was proclaimed King of France. We heard of it in due course, as ships brought news. I was serving with the American forces.

The world is fluid to a boy. He can do and dare anything. But it hardens around a man and becomes a wall thru which he must cut. I felt the wall close around me.

In September I was wounded at the battle of Plattsburg on Lake Champlain. Three men, besides the General and the doctor, and my Oneida, showed a differing interest in me, while I lay with a gap under my left arm, in a hospital tent.

First came Count de Chaumont, his face plowed with lines; no longer the trim gentleman, youthfully easy, and in his full maturity, that he had been when I first saw him at close range.

He sat down on a camp seat by my cot, and I asked him before he could speak—

"Where is Madame de Ferrier?"

"She's dead," he answered.

"I don't believe it."

"You're young. I'm going back to France for a while. France will not be what it was under the Empire. I'm tired of most things, however, and my holdings here make me independent of changes there."

"What reason have you to think that she is dead?"

"Do you know the Indiana Territory well?"

"The northern part only."

"It happened in what was called the Pigeon Roost settlement at the fork of the White River. The Kickapoos and Winnebagoes did it. There were about two dozen people in the settlement."

"I asked how you know these things."

"I have some of the best Indian runners that ever trod moccasins, and when I set them to scouting they generally find what I want—so I know a great many things."

"But Paul——"

"It's an old custom to adopt children into the tribes. You know your father, Chief Williams, is descended from a white girl who was a prisoner. There were about two dozen people in the settlement, men, women and children. The majority of the children were dashed against trees. It has been consolation to me to think she did not survive in the hands of savages."

The hidden causes which work out results never worked out a result more improbable. I lay silent, and De Chaumont said:

"Do you remember the night you disappeared from the Tuileries?"

"I remember it."

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"You remember we determined not to let the Marquis de Ferrier see Napoleon. When you went down the corridor with Eagle I thought you were luring him. But she told us afterward you were threatened with arrest, and she helped you out of the Tuileries by a private stairway."

"Did it make any stir in the palace?"

"No. I saw one man hurrying past us. But nobody heard of the arrest except Eagle."

"How did she get out?"

"Out of what?"

"The Queen's closet."

"She was in the garden. She said she went down the private stairway to avoid the gendarme. She must have done it cleverly, for she came in on the arm of Junot and the matter was not noticed. There stood my emergency facing me again. You had deserted. What made you imagine you were threatened with arrest?"

"Because a gendarme in court dress laid his hand on my shoulder and told me I was to come with him."

"Well, you may have drawn the secret police upon you. You have been cutting a pretty figure. It was probably wise to drop between walls and get out of France. Do you know why you were arrested?"

"I think the groundless charge would have been an attack upon Napoleon."

"You never attacked the Emperor!"

"No. But I had every reason to believe such a charge would be sworn against me if I ever came to trial."

"Perhaps that silly Dauphin story leaked out in Paris. The Emperor does hate a Bourbon. But I thought you had tricked me. And the old Marquis never took his eyes off the main issue. He gave Eagle his arm, and was ready to go in and thank the Emperor."

"You had to tell him?"

"I had to tell him."

"What did he say?"

"Not a word. All the blood seemed to be drawn out of his veins, and his face fell in. Then it burned red hot, and instead of good friend and benefactor, I saw myself a convict. His big staring blue eyes came out of a film like an owl's, and shot me thru. I believe he saw everything I ever did in my life, and my intentions about Eagle most plainly of all. He bowed and wished me good night, and took her out of the Tuileries."

"But you saw him again?"

"He never let me see him again, or her either. I am certain he forbade her to communicate with us. They did not go back to Mont-Louis. They left their hotel in Paris. I wrote imploring him to hold the estates. My messages were returned. I don't know how he got money enough to emigrate. But emigrate they did; avoiding Castorland, where the Saint-Michels, who brought her up, lived in comfort, and might have comforted her, and where I could have made her life easy. He probably dragged her thru depths of poverty, before they joined a company bound for the Indiana Territory, where the Pigeon Roost settlement was planted. I have seen old Saint-Michel work at clearing, and can imagine the Marquis de Ferrier sweating weakly while he chopped trees. It is a satisfaction to know they had Ernestine with them. De Ferrier might have plowed with Eagle," said the Count, hotly. "He never hesitated to make use of her."

While I had been living a monk's studious, well-provided life, was she toiling in the fields? I groaned aloud.

De Chaumont dropped his head on his breast.

"It hurts me more than I care to let anybody but you know, Lazarre. If I hadn't received that letter I should have avoided you. I wish you had saved Paul. I would adopt him."

"I think not, my dear Count."

"Nonsense, boy! I wouldn't let you have him."

"You have a child."

"Her husband has her. But let us not pitch and toss words. No use quarreling over a dead boy. What right have you to Eagle's child?"

"Not your right of faithful useful friendship. Only my own right."

"What's that?"

"Nothing that she ever admitted."

"I was afraid of you," said De Chaumont, "when you flowered out with old Du Plessy, like an heir lost in emigration and found again. You were a startling fellow, dropping on the Faubourg; and anything was possible under the Empire. You know I never believed the Dauphin nonsense, but a few who remembered said you looked like the King. You were the King to her; above mating with the best of the old nobility. She wouldn't have married you."

"Did she ever give you reason to think she would marry you?"

"She never gave me reason to think she would marry anybody. But what's the use of groaning? There's distraction abroad. I took the trails to see you, when I heard you were with the troops on Champlain. I shall be long in France. What can I do for you, my boy?"

"Nothing, Count. You have already done much."

"She had a foolish interest in you. The Dauphin!—Too good to sit at table with us, you raw savage!—Had to be waited on by old Jean! And she would have had me serve you, myself!"

He laughed, and so did I. We held hands, clinging in fellowship.

"I might not have refused your service; like Marquis de Ferrier."

The Count's face darkened.

"I'll not abuse him. He's dead."

"Are you sure he's dead this time, Count?"

"A Kickapoo is carrying his scalp. Trust my runners. They have traced him so much for me they know the hair on his stubborn head. I must go where I can have amusement, Lazarre. This country is a young man's country. I'm getting old. Adieu. You're one of the young men."

Some changes of light and darkness passed over me, and the great anguish of my wound increased until there was no rest. However, the next man who visited me stood forth at the side of the stretcher as Bellenger. I thought I dreamed him, being light-headed with fever. He was unaccountably weazened, robbed of juices, and powdering to dust on the surface. His mustache had grown again, and he carried it over his ears in the ridiculous manner affected when I saw him in the fog.

"Where's your potter's wheel?" I inquired.

"In the woods by Lake George, sire."

"Do you still find clay that suits you?"

"Yes, sire."

"Have you made that vase yet?"

"No, sire. I succeed in nothing."

"You succeed in tracking me."

He swam before my eyes, and I pointed to the surgeon's camp-chair.

"Not in your presence, sire."

"Have you lost your real Dauphin?" I inquired.

"I have the honor of standing before the real Dauphin."

"So you swore at Mittau!"

"I perjured myself."

"Well, what are you doing now?"

"Sire, I am a man in failing health. Before the end I have come to tell you the truth."

"Do you think you can do it?"

"Sire"—said Bellenger.

"Your King is Louis XVIII.," I reminded him.

"He is not my King."

"Taken your pension away, has he?"

"I no longer receive anything from that court."

"And your Dauphin?"

"He was left in Europe."

"Look here, Bellenger! Why did you treat me so? Dauphin or no Dauphin, what harm was I doing you?"

"I thought a strong party was behind you. And I knew there had been double dealing with me. You represented some invisible power tricking me. I was beside myself, and faced it out in Mittau. I have been used shamefully, and thrown aside when I am failing. Hiding out in the hills ruined my health."

"Let us get to facts, if you have facts. Do you know anything about me, Bellenger?"

"Yes, sire."

"Who am I?"

"Louis XVII. of France."

"What proof can you give me?"

"First, sire, permit a man who has been made a wretched tool, to implore forgiveness of his rightful sovereign, and a little help to reach a warmer climate before the rigors of a Northern winter begin."

"Bellenger, you are entrancing," I said. "Why did I ever take you seriously? Ste. Pelagie was a grim joke, and tipping in the river merely your playfulness. You had better take yourself off now, and keep on walking until you come to a warmer climate."

He wrung his hands with a gesture that touched my natural softness to my enemy.

"Talk, then. Talk, man. What have you to say?"

"This, first, sire. That was a splendid dash you made into France!"

"And what a splendid dash I made out of it again, with a gendarme at my coat tails, and you behind the gendarme!"

"But it was the wrong time. If you were there now—the French people are so changeable——"

"I shall never be there again. His majesty the eighteenth Louis is welcome. What the blood stirs in me to know is, have I a right to the throne?"

"Sire, the truth as I know it, I will tell you. You were the boy taken from the Temple prison."

"Who did it?"

"Agents of the royalist party whose names would mean nothing to you if I gave them."

"I was placed in your hands?"

"You were placed in my hands to be taken to America."

"I was with you in London, where two royalists who knew me recognized me?"

"The two De Ferriers."

"Did a woman named Madame Tank see me?"

Bellenger was startled.

"You were noticed on the ship by a court-lady of Holland; a very clever courtier. I had trouble in evading her. She suspected too much, and asked too many questions; and would have you to play with her baby on the deck, tho at that time you noticed nothing."

"But where does the idiot come into my story?"

"Sire, you have been unfortunate, but I have been a victim. When we landed in New York I went directly and made myself known to the man who was to

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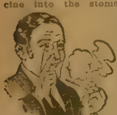

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act as purveyor of your majesty's pension. He astonished me by declaring that the Dauphin was already there, and had claimed the pension for that year. The country and the language were unknown to me. The agent spoke French, it is true, but we hardly understood each other. I supposed I had nothing to do but present my credentials. Here was another idiot—I crave your majesty's pardon——"

"Quite right—at the time, Bellenger."

—"drawing the annuity intended for the Dauphin. I inquired into his rights. The agent showed me papers like my own. I asked who presented them. He knew no more of the man than he did of me. I demanded to face the man. No such person could be found. I demanded to see the idiot. He was shut in a room and fed by a hired keeper. I sat down and thought much. Clearly it was not the agent's affair. He followed instructions. Good! I would follow instructions also. Months would have been required to ask and receive explanations from the court of Monsieur. He had assumed the title of Louis XVIII., for the good of the royalist cause, as if there were no prince. I thought I saw what was expected of me."

"And what did you see, you unspeakable scoundrel?"

"I saw that there was a Dauphin too many, hopelessly idiotic. But if he was the one to be guarded, I would guard him."

"Who was that idiot?"

"Some unknown pauper. No doubt of that."

"And what did you do with me?"

"A chief of the Iroquois Indians can tell you that."

"This is a clumsy story, Bellenger. Try again."

"Sire——"

"If you knew so little of the country, how did you find an Iroquois chief?"

"I met him in the woods when he was hunting. I offered to give you to him, pretending you had the annuity from Europe. Sire, I do not know why trickery was practiced on me, or who practiced it; why such pains were taken to mix the clews which led to the Dauphin. But afterward the same agent had orders to give you two-thirds and me only one-third of the yearly sum. I thought the court was in straits—when both Russia and Spain supported it! I was nothing but a court painter. But when you went to France, I blocked your way with all the ingenuity I could bring."

"I would like to ask you, Bellenger, what a man is called who attempts the life of his King?"

"Sire, the tricks of royalists pitted us against each other."

"That's enough, Bellenger. I don't believe a word you say, excepting that part of your story agreeing with Madame de Ferrier's. Put your hand under my pillow and find my wallet. Now help yourself, and never let me see you again."

He helped himself to everything except a few shillings, weeping because his necessities were so great. But I told him I was used to being robbed, and he had done me all the harm he could; so his turn to pluck me naturally followed.

Then I softened, as I always do toward the claimant of the other part, and added that we were on the same footing; I had been a pensioner myself.

"Sire, I thank you," said Bellenger, having shaken the wallet and poked his fingers into the lining where an unheard-of gold piece could have lodged. "It tickles my vanity to be called sire."

"You are a true prince," said Bellenger. "My life would be well spent if I could see you restored to your own."

"So I infer, from the valuable [illegible] you have spent trying to bring that result about."

"Your majesty [illegible] of finding support in France."

"The last King liked to tinker with clocks. Perhaps I like to tinker with Indians."

"Sire, it is due to your birth——"

"Never mind my birth," I said. "[illegible] busy with my life."

He bowed himself out of my presence without turning. This tribute to royalty should have touched me. He took a handsome adieu, and did not afterward seek further reward for his service. I heard in the course of years that he died in New Orleans, confessing much regarding myself to people who cared nothing about it, and thought him crazy.

The third to appear at my tent door was Chief Williams, himself. The surgeon told him outside the tent that it was a dangerous wound. He had little hope for me, and I had indifferent hope myself, lying in torpor and finding it an effort to speak. But after several days of effort I did speak.

The chief sat beside me, concerned and silent.

"Father," I said.

The chief harkened near to my lips.

"Tell me," I begged, after resting, "who brought me to you."

His dark sullen face became tender. "It was a Frenchman," he answered. "I was hunting and met him on the lake with two boys. He offered to give you to me. We had just lost a son."

When I had rested again, I asked.

"Do you know anything else about me?"

"No."

The subject was closed between us. And all subjects were closed betwixt the world and me, for my face turned the other way.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BUT the chief's and Skenedonk's nursing and Indian remedies brought me face earthward again, reviving the surgeon's hope.

When blood and life mounted, and my torn side sewed up its gap in a healthy scar, adding another to my collection, autumn was upon us. From the hunting lodges on Lake George, and the Williamses of Longmeadow, I went to the scorched capital of Washington. In the end the Government helped me with my Indian plan, tho when Skenedonk and I pushed out toward Illinois Territory we had only my pay and a grant of land. Peace was not formally made until December, but the war ended that summer.

The Oneidas were ready to follow wherever I led them. And so were many families of the Iroquois federation. But the Mohawk tribe held back. However, I felt confident of material for an Indian state when the foundation should be laid.

We started lightly equipped upon the horse paths. The long journey by water and shore brought us in October to the head of Green Bay. We had seen Lake Michigan, of a light transparent blueness, with fire ripples chasing from the sunset. And we had rested at noon in plum groves on the vast prairies, oases of fertile deserts, where pink and white fruit drops, so ripe that the sun preserves it in its juice. The freshness of the new world continually flowed around us.

Physical life riots in the joy of its revival. I was so glad to be alive after touching death that I could think of Madame de Ferrier without pain, and say more confidently, "She is not dead," because resurrection was working in myself.

Green Bay or La Baye, as the fur hunters called it, was a little post almost like a New England village among its elms; one street and a few outlying houses beside the Fox River. The open world had been our tavern; or any sod or log hut cast up like a burrow of human prairie dogs or moles. We did not expect to find a tavern in Green Bay. Yet such a place was pointed out to us near the Fur Company's block warehouse. It had no signpost, and the only visible stable was a pen of logs. Tho negro slaves were owned in the Illinois Territory, we saw none when a red-headed man rushed forth shouting:

"Sam, you lazy nigger, come here and take the gentleman's horses! Where is that Sam? Light down, sir, with your Indian, and I will lead your beasts to the hostler myself."

In the same way our host provided a supper and bed with armies of invisible servants. Skenedonk climbed a ladder to the loft with our saddlebags.

"Where is that chambermaid?" cried the tavern keeper.

"Yes, where is she?" said a man who lounged on a bench by the entrance. "I've heard of her so often I would like to see her myself."

The landlord, deaf to raillery, bustled about and spread our table in his public room.

"Corn bread, hominy, side meat, ven'zin," he shouted in the kitchen. "Stir yourself, you black rascal, and dish up the gentleman's supper."

Our host served us himself, running with sleeves turned back to admonish an imaginary cook. His taproom was the fireplace cupboard, and it was visited while we ate our supper, by men in elkskin trousers, and caps and hooded capotes of blue cloth. These Canadians mixed their own drink, and made a cross-mark on the inside of the cupboard door, using a system of bookkeeping evidently agreed upon between themselves and the landlord. He shouted for the lazy barkeeper, who answered nothing out of nothingness.

Nightfall was very clear and fair in this Northwestern territory. A man felt nearer to the sunset. The region took hold upon me; particularly when one who was neither a warehouseman nor a Canadian fur hunter, hurried in and took me by the hand.

"I am Pierre Grignon," he said.

Indeed, if he had held his fiddle, and tuned it upon an arm not quite so stout, I should have known without being told that he was the man who had played in the Saint-Michel cabin while Annabel de Chaumont climbed the chimney.

We sat and talked until the light faded. The landlord brought a candle, and yelled up the loft, where Skenedonk had already stretched himself in his blanket, as he loved to do:

"Chambermaid, light up!"

"You drive your slaves too hard, landlord," said Pierre Grignon.

"You'd think I hadn't any, Mr. Grignon; for they're never in the way when they're wanted."

"One industrious man you certainly have."

"Yes, Sam is a good fellow; but I'll have to go out and wake him up and make him rub the horses down."

"Never mind," said Pierre Grignon. "I'm going to take these travelers home with me."

"Now I know how a tavern ought to be kept," said the landlord. "But what's the use of my keeping one if Pierre Grignon carries off all the guests?"

"He is my old friend," I told the landlord.

"He's old friend to everybody that comes to Green Bay. I'll never get so much as a sign painted to hang in front of the Palace Tavern."

I gave him twice his charges and he said:

"What a loss it was to enterprise in the Bay when Pierre Grignon came here and built for the whole United States!"

The Grignon house, whether built for the whole United States or not, was the largest in Green Bay. Its lawn sloped down to the Fox River. It was a huge

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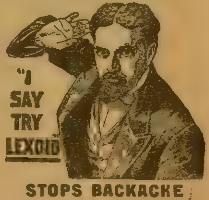

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square of oak timbers, with a detached kitchen, sheltered by giant elms.

A hall divided the house thru the center, and here Madame Grignon welcomed me as if I were a long-expected guest, for this was her custom; and as soon as she clearly remembered me, led me into a drawing-room where a stately old lady sat making lace.

This was the grandmother of the house. Such a house would have been incomplete without a grandmother at the hearth.

The furniture of this hall or family room had been brought from Montreal. The servants were Pawnee Indians moving about their duties almost with stealth.

The little Grignon daughter who had stood lost in wonder at the dancing of Annabel de Chaumont, was now a turner of heads herself, all flaxen white, and contrasting with the darkness of Katarina Tank. Katarina was taken home to the Grignons' after her mother's death. Both girls had been educated in Montreal.

The seigniorial state in which Pierre Grignon lived became at once evident. I found it was the custom during Advent for all the villagers to meet in his house and sing hymns. On Christmas day his tables were loaded for everybody who came. If any one died, he was brought to Pierre Grignon's for prayer, and after his burial, the mourners went back to Pierre Grignon's for supper. Pierre Grignon and his wife were godfather and godmother to most of the children born at La Baye. The few American officers stationed at the old stockade, nearly every evening met the beauties of Green Bay at Pierre Grignon's, and if he did not fiddle for them he led Madame in the dancing. Laughter and the joy of life filled the house every waking hour of the twenty-four.

"Poor Madame Tank! She would have been so much more comfortable in her death if she had relieved her mind," Madame Ursule said, the first evening, as we sat in a pause of the dancing. "She used to speak of you often, for seeing you made a great impression upon her, and she never let us forget you. I am sure she knew more about you than she ever told me. 'I have an important disclosure to make,' she says. 'Come around me, I want all of you to hear it!' Then she fell back and died without telling it."

A touch of mystery was not lacking to the house. Several times I saw the tail of a gray gown disappear thru an open door. Some woman half entered and drew back.

"It's Madeleine Jordan," an inmate told me each time. "She avoids strangers"

I asked if Madeleine Jordan was a relative.

"Oh, no," Madame Ursule replied; "but the family who brought her here went back to Canada, and of course they left her with us."

Of course Madeleine Jordan, or anybody else who lacked a roof, would be left with the Grignons; but in that house a hermit seemed out of place, and I said so to Madame Ursule.

"Poor child!" she responded. "I think she likes the bustle and noise. She is not a hermit. What difference can it make to her whether people are around her or not?"

The subject of Madeleine Jordan was no doubt beyond a man's handling. I had other matters to think about, and directly plunged into them. First the Menominees and Winnebagoes must be assembled in council. They held all the desirable land.

"We don't like your Indian scheme in Green Bay," said Pierre Grignon. "But if the tribes here are willing to sell their lands, other settlers can't prevent it."

He went with me to meet the savages on the opposite side of the Fox near the stockade. There the talking and eating lasted two days. At the end of that time I had a footing for our Iroquois in the Wisconsin portion of the Illinois Territory; and the savages who granted it danced a war dance in our honor. Every brave shook over his head the scalps he had taken. I saw one cap of soft long brown hair.

"Eh!" said Pierre Grignon, sitting beside me. "Their dirty trophies make you ghastly! Do your Eastern tribes never dance war dances?"

After the land was secured its boundaries had to be set. Then my own grant demanded attention; and last, I was anxious to put my castle on it before snow flew. Many of those late autumn nights Skenedonk and I spent camping. The outdoor life was a joy to me. Our land lay up the Fox River and away from the bay.

When we had laid the foundation of the Indian settlement, I built my house with the help of skilled men. It was a spacious one of hewn logs, chinked with cat-and-clay plaster, showing its white ribs on the hill above the Fox. In time I meant to cover the ribs with perennial vines. There was a spring near the porches. The woods banked me on the rear, and an elm spread its colossal umbrella over the roof. Fertile fields stretched at my left, and on my right a deep ravine lined with white birches, carried a stream to the Fox.

From my stronghold to the river was a long descent. The broadening and narrowing channel could be seen for miles. A bushy island, beloved of wild ducks, parted the water, lying as Moses hid in osiers, amidst tall growths of wild oats. Lily pads stretched their pavements in the oats. Beyond were rolling banks, and beyond those, wooded hills rising terrace over terrace to the dawn. Many a sunrise was to come to me over those hills. Oaks and pines and sumach gathered to my doorway.

In my mind I saw the garden we afterward created; with many fruit trees, beds, and winding walks, trellised seats, squares of flaming tulips, phlox, hollyhocks, roses. It should reach down into the ravine, where humid ferns and rocks met plants that love darkling ground Yet it should not be too dark. I would lop boughs rather than have a growing thing spindle as if rooted in Ste. Pelagie'—and no man who loves trees can do that without feeling the knife at his heart. What is long developing is precious like the immortal part of us

The stoicism that comes of endurance has something of death in it. I prepared a home without thought of putting [illegible] wife therein. I had grown used to being alone, with the exception of Skenedonk's taciturn company. The house was for castle and resting place after labor. I took satisfaction in the rude furniture we made for it. In after years it became filled with rich gifts from the other side of the world, and books that have gladdened my heart. Yet in its virginhood, before pain or joy or achievement had entered there, before spade struck the ground which was to send up food, my holding on the earth's surface made me feel prince of a principality.

Before the river closed and winter set in, Skenedonk and I went back to Green Bay. I did not know how to form my household, and had it in mind to consult Madame Ursule. Pawnees could be had, and many French landholders in the territory owned black slaves. Pierre Grignon himself kept one little negro like a monkey among the stately Indians.

Dealing with acres, and with people wild as flocks, would have been worth while if nothing had resulted except our welcome back to Pierre Grignon's open house. The grandmother hobbled on her stick across the floor to give me her hand. Madame Ursule reproached me with delaying, and Pierre said it was high time to seek winter quarters. The girls recounted harvest reels and even weddings, with dances following, which I had lost while away from the center of festivity.

The little negro carried my saddlebags to the guestroom. Skenedonk was to sleep on the floor. Abundant preparations for the evening meal were going forward in the kitchen. As I mounted the stairway at Madame Ursule's direction, I heard a tinkle of china, her very best, which adorned racks and dressers. It was being set forth on the mahogany board.

The upper floor of Pierre Grignon's house was divided by a hall similar to the one below. I ran upstairs and halted.

Standing with her back to the fading light which came thru one fan window at the hall end, was a woman's figure in a gray dress. I gripped the rail.

My first thought was: "How shall I tell her about Paul?" My next was: "What is the matter with her?"

She rippled from head to foot in the quiver of rapture peculiar to her, and stretched forth her arms to me crying:

"Paul! Paul!"

A great many persons have told us this is the best serial we have run in years. Moreover, it puts you in touch with history, the history of your own land. Another generous installment will be published in next week's Ledger and it perhaps is the most gripping of any that has gone before.

* * *

Their Inspiration.

"WHAT in the world was the matter?" asked Bilson. "While that wonderful four-piece orchestra was giving us that rhapsody at the moving-picture theater you sat as if in a stupor. Evidently you did not hear a note of it. Your ears were sealed to all that harmony. Were you getting ready to hibernate for the winter? It was awful."

"I know it, Henry," replied Mrs. Bilson. "But how could any one listen to the music when that pathetic film was on? My, how I felt for that poor girl, wandering the cold street, and nobody to help but the camera man and the director! Wasn't that villain a brute?'

"I don't know, dear! I told you I paid no attention to the film. The music had me. It was great stuff."

"What a mind!" said Mrs. Bilson. "This was Effa Sping's best feature. She had never had anything to suit her until now.

"Her waif is just wonderful. So different from Maida Bilker's. Maida is a born society belle and when she is cast as a waif she looks anything but the part. Effa is a born waif. I wouldn't be surprised if she was some poor orphan in real life before she got into the moving pictures."

"We won't go into Effa's past history or antecedents. Oh, that music! Honestly, Miranda, it made a poet out of me again, the way the springtime used to, and the harvest moon. I'm not joking. I wrote the words down on my program as they came to me. You know I'm ordinarily modest, but this seems awfully good, even if I did write it How is this

"'The oboe flirted with the flute,
It trilled its love song—then was mute.'"

"My goodness!" said Mrs. Bilson. "I didn't know you had it in you!"

"Well, I had," said Bilson. "I did another little poem while the music was on. Listen to this:

"'The trombone growls in anger at the
drum.
The drum beats back in anger—thon is
mum.'"

"It is great poetry, Henry," said Mrs. Bilson. "But the tickets cost fifteen cents apiece, and while the war is on we ought not to waste money or anything. While you were trying to put a halter on Pegasus I was raking in new ideas by wholesale.

'I learned exactly how Effa Sping gets her hair up in that odd twist. I noticed for the first time that she has feet much larger than mine. That dress she wore in the living-room scene is a peau de soie with jet trimming. I think one just like it will be awfully becoming to me and I want to see my modiste tomorrow and take her to see the film. If she thinks well of it I'll buy the goods while I'm downtown and——"

"Hereafter," said Bilson, interrupting, "we are to see no films but Charlie Chaplin

* * *

Most Precious Relic.

A GROUP of children whose mothers belonged to the Daughters of the Revolution were overheard discussing some historic relics which had descended as heirlooms in their respective families. One little girl said her mother had a knife and fork that Washington had once used.

Others named curios of various kinds, each trying to outdo the other in upholding the family importance in regard to antiques. But Grace, tho youngest of the lot, carried off the honor.

"My mother has a teapot," said she, "that was used in the Boston tea party."

* * *

Caught in the Act.

Visitor (in church)—"And do you find people come in here during the week for peace and meditation?"

Sexton—"Ay, sir, that they do; why, I caught two of 'em in 'ere only last week.

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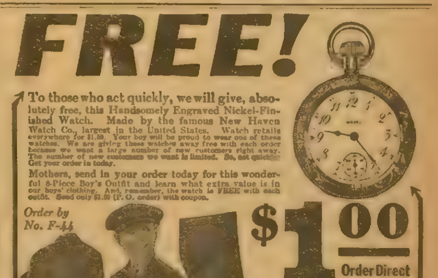
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Wartime Boy Rangers

By Captain Jack Judson

Synopsis.

THE story occurs in the year 1794. General Anthony Wayne has commissioned Eben Holden and Jack Benson, boy woodsmen, to capture Red Sticks, the Miami, leader of Indians who are on the warpath. They find the Indian camp and, disguised as redskins, penetrate it to find Old Simpson, a white man, a prisoner. As they plan to free him, a tomahawk, thrown by Moonlight, a friendly Indian girl, severs his bonds. The camp is aroused and the three flee for their lives. The two boys, surprised in a hiding place by Red Sticks, capture him, but as they near General Wayne's camp he is freed by his Indians and the boys made prisoners. Moonlight cuts their bonds and they escape when Old Simpson, disguised as a mad Indian, frightens the redskins. Meanwhile Misa, Eben's sister, has been captured by the Indians. The boys lure her guard away and release her. Then they flee, pursued by the Indians.

A band of Kentuckians under Captain Buckskin appear and drive away the Indians. The Kentuckians take Misa with them to put her in a place of safety. The two boys remain and retire for the night in a cave. A bear invades the cave and the boys are in a predicament when Old Simpson, who has been sleeping in the cave, unknown to the boys, awakens and routs the bear. Red Sticks undertakes to find out the plans of General Wayne and on the way is attacked by a panther, which is killed by Eben's rifle. The boys take Red Sticks prisoner. The Indian lies down and refuses to march. The boys are captured by Tom Girty and a band of Indians, who do not see Red Sticks, however. The boys are tied to a tree and are told that on the morrow they must run the gantlet.

This story was begun in No. 47, November 24. Subscriptions may begin with that issue or back copies obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

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CHAPTER X.

RUNNING THE GANTLET.

LASHED to the tree where we left them, Jack and Eben awaited as calmly as they could the terrible ordeal which confronted them. They had heard from Tom Girty's lips that they were to run the gantlet, and Eagle Feather, the Indian youth, had informed them that the event would take place along the banks of a little stream which was not far from the Indian camp.

"We must keep up a stout heart," Eben said, encouragingly, to his companion. "Do not for a moment let our enemies think that we have lost [illegible]"

"They shall not see me falter," Jack responded, in firm tones. "I am going to let these rascals know that I can die, if I must, as bravely as they [illegible]"

"That's right, Jack!"

During the day they could [illegible] foes preparing for the gantlet. [illegible] switches were cut in the forest and some of them approached the proportions of clubs. A number of squaws who had followed the red army were busy at this labor, for they were as eager as the warriors to fell the [illegible] as they made their way between the Indian ranks.

"Yonder is Moonshine, the Shawnee girl!" suddenly exclaimed Jack, in low tones. "I have heard nothing of her since she rescued Old Simpson."

Eben saw at a glance that Jack was right, for the graceful figure of the Indian beauty was not far off. She seemed to be looking for something on the ground, but the boys perceived that she was at the same time cautiously approaching them.

Presently she came within speaking distance, after glancing about, and they heard her voice in suppressed tones:

"White boys must run tonight," said Moonshine.

"That is what I hear," responded Eben.

"Indians getting ready for the gantlet. If white boys reach the painted post let them keep right on."

"Yes."

"They are not to be spared even if they reach the post," the girl went on. "The white renegade's blood is hot and he is for death. After the gantlet will come the stake. White boys must not stop at the post."

"We understand," answered Eben. "If our legs don't fail us we'll outrun the whole camp."

A smile flitted over the dark face of the Shawnee lass. She seemed pleased.

Then, without having been observed, apparently, she glided away to be lost to view. The doomed boys could not follow her far with their eyes; therefore they did not see Tom Girty clutch Moonshine's arm and whirl her about on her toes.

"See here!" cried the renegade, [illegible] eyes seemed to emit flashes of [illegible] "Who gave you liberty to talk to the white rats at the tree?"

Moonshine drew herself up with the regality of a queen and firmly met the villain's eyes.

"What right have you to touch the daughter of Oonalaska?" she demanded. "Your touch is like the sting of the serpent that hisses in the forest."

"I touch whom I please. The white boys are my captives, and no one has a right to talk to them without my permission."

The lip of Moonshine curled defiantly.

"Moonshine talks to whom she pleases," she exclaimed, suddenly lifting a hand which carried a little whip which she had platted in her rambles.

"Oho! You defy me?" cried the renegade.

"Moonshine does not fear the [illegible] snake who shot Little Wolf as [illegible] shoot a mangy dog."

"Getting gay, eh?" grinned Girty. "Talk to those boys again, and I'll take your whip and scar your pretty back."

The last words had hardly been spoken when the whip was thrown into the air, and the next instant it was laid across the renegade's face with all the power the wielder could command. Girty recoiled with a cry like the roar of a wild beast.

There was a great red welt upon his face, for the lash had laid the skin open and blood was flowing freely.

The girl with fire in her eyes stood in her tracks waiting for Girty to make another move. But the white demon had had enough, and with a curse which seemed a hiss he turned on his heel and tramped away.

The doomed boys saw nothing of this incident; if they had they would have applauded the Shawnee girl, who, after the affray, walked deliberately away.

Slowly the sun sank to the west and the shadows of the trees grew long. There were certain [illegible] tain point and the warriors were doing the same.

"It won't be long now till they come after us," remarked Jack.

"The hour is close at hand. Remember Moonshine's instructions. If we reach the painted post alive we are to keep right on."

"I have not forgotten, Eben, and my legs won't fail me. They have never done so yet——"

"Neither have mine," interrupted Eben, with a glow of pride. "We'll need their services tonight, I'm thinking."

A few minutes later a number of Indians were seen coming forward.

"Here they are," Jack whispered.

The day was now gone with the exception of here and there the faintest signs of dusk. The forest was getting dark, and the boys could see some distance away the flare of many torches.

Without any ceremony the Indians released Eben and Jack from bondage and placed them in the center of the lot. There was no mercy in the eyes that regarded them.

In spite of their coolness, both boys started when they came in sight of the gantlet ground. The sight was enough to chill the boldest heart.

They beheld two long lines of Indians, men and women. They faced each other, but were separated by a space of about five feet. It was thru this human lane that the young rangers were expected to race for their lives to a painted post which had been set up at the farther end.

They could not but notice in the glare of the flambeaux that every Indian carried a huge switch with which the gantlet runners were to be struck as they passed down the dreadful lane.

Conspicuous among the savages stood the white renegade, his scowling face painted and a headdress of hawk feathers upon his hair. He was in his element, for his hand had never performed a [illegible]ful deed.

The boys were halted at the opening of the lane and their guards stepped back.

"White boys see the post yonder?" asked a young chief who now came forward. "It is their goal. They must reach it to save their lives."

There was no reply by the captives.

"Yes, and they will get many a good beating before they gain the post!" cried Tom Girty. "Let every warrior and squaw strike with all their might, for the white rats belong to the Yengee army that would destroy the homes of the red men."

This harangue was too much for Eben. It went thru his blood like an electric shock. With clinched hands he turned upon Girty.

"If we are white rats what are you, Tom Girty?" he exclaimed. "You have dyed your hands with the blood of women and children of your own race. A meaner dog than you never hunted for blood in the forest. If I had a dog named after you, I'd take him into the woods and blow his head off with my rifle. Your time is near at hand. Your days are numbered, for you are soon to die like the villain you are. And they will leave you to rot where you fall, and the buzzards will pick your bones, glad to have the chance of leaving them to bleach in the sun."

As Eben ceased, silent approbation was seen in the eyes of the chiefs, for deep in their hearts they despised the scoundrels who had allied themselves with them.

Girty's face was white as ashes, and he was gritting his teeth under Eben's burning words.

"Boys must run now!" cried a loud voice. "Yonder stands the post."

The young rangers braced themselves and straightened their nerves.

"Now!" exclaimed Eben.

The next moment they had launched themselves forward and were flying down the lane of death.

"To the post!" cried Jack, as he dodged half a dozen blows.

"And then on, on!" answered Eben. "I'm going to live for vengeance!" And on they went, with blows seeking them like hailstones in a thunderstorm.

CHAPTER XI.

RED STICKS ONCE MORE.

EBEN and Jack had realized from the first that it was to be a run for life, and when they started they resolved to cheat their enemies if possible. The array of clubs and switches that greeted them was quite enough to chill one's blood. The squaws stood ready to fell them the moment they came within reach, and the young bucks were equally ready to do the same.

The boys had not forgotten a story told to them by Obed Simpson, how once upon a time he had been forced to run the gantlet, how he snatched a club from the hands of a brave and beat his way to the painted post.

"Remember how Obed did it," were Eben's last words to Jack ere they sprang away.

Jack nodded and they were off.

The first blows missed them, owing to their sudden start, but in a second they were in a whirlwind of weapons. The air was rent with mad cries. Suddenly Eben sprang aside, and with the quickness of an athlete tore a long stick from the grasp of a squaw. Jack did the same.

In another instant they were dashing on, striking right and left with a fury which seemed to stupefy their captors. It was not only a run but a fight for life.

More than one warrior who had faced foes in the forest quailed before the weapons now carried by the young rangers. They had not looked for such an exploit, and before they could recover the two runners were more than halfway down the lane.

"On! On!" cried Eben, to encourage his companion. "We've got the devils terror-stricken."

Such indeed seemed to be the situation, and, with fewer bruises than they expected, they reached the post, not altogether fatigued, tho nearly so.

"Now for the woods!" exclaimed Jack, as he cast away his club. "It is not Girty's design that we shall escape. There's some run in my legs yet——"

"And a good deal in mine, Jack," was the response, and, without looking back at the discomfited Indians, they sprang away with the eagerness of deer anxious to escape from the wilderness pack.

There were mad yells behind them the moment their intention was discovered, and without even glancing over their shoulders, the boys kept on, skilfully avoiding fallen timber in the faint starlight that sifted thru the boughs.

There was no halt in the swift sprint for more than thirty minutes. They found a ford in the stream and, dashing thru the rippling water, reached the farther bank refreshed by their nocturnal plunge.

The cries of their pursuers were no longer heard. A strange stillness had settled over the scene, and as they looked into each other's eyes they felt the thrills of triumph.

"It wasn't so bad after all," smiled Jack. "I thought we were never going to reach the pesky post. It seemed to recede as I ran, but I resolved to gain it or perish."

Eben did not reply, for he was silently taking an inventory of his bruises.

"That big squaw in the middle of the line," he suddenly growled, "gave me the unkindliest lick of all! If she had put a little more power in her blow, I guess I wouldn't be here to tell about it."

"It nearly dropped you, Eben."

"Nearly wound me up, Jack. I felt my legs weaken, but I guess I paid her back."

"She tumbled over like a log," Jack laughed.

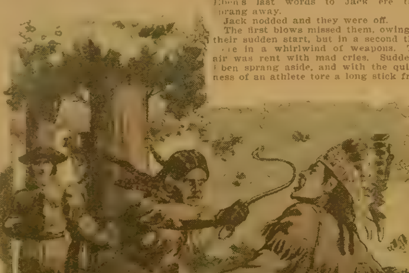
"Now," resumed Eben, "I wonder what has become of Red Sticks."

"He was well trussed up when I left him, but I fear he got loose and will give us more trouble."

"I'm not so sure about his escaping without help," was Eben's retort.

"He could roll away and find some of his own comrades, you know."

"We will have to look for him now



Girty Recoiled as She Struck at His Face.

that we are out of the death trap. Mad Anthony must by now be wondering what has become of us."

"I doubt not that the old fellow is anxious, but I hate to go back without Red Sticks."

"We are going to look the Miami up first of all things," Eben said. "We'll get our bearings first and then for our late prisoner."

"Getting bearings" to those who have spent their lives in the forest is not such a difficult task. Examining the trees and finding the moss on the north side enabled our young rangers to steer aright, and in a little while they came upon familiar ground.

But where was Red Sticks? It was hardly probable that he would be found where they had left him. Indeed, they scarcely looked for this good fortune, for the Miami was full of craft and he would be likely to roll thru the forest till he found some one who would release him of his bonds.

"We must be near the right spot," said Eben, halting in a certain place. "I remember that fallen tree and——"

"But not that panther in yon fork!"

Eben recoiled and followed Jack's finger.

There in the fork of the fallen monarch of the wilderness crouched a huge animal, looking for all the world like a monster cat. The boys were unarmed, and on this account they instinctively drew back, as the cat eyed them with dumb curiosity.

"Let the old chap alone," admonished Jack.

"That is just what I'm going to do," smiled Eben. "You don't think I have a hankering for those claws after running that horrible gantlet?"

They drew back, still watching the beast, that seemed to send out a challenge with his dilated eyes.

The panther seemed disappointed at not having a tussle with his expected prey, and when the boys were beyond the limits of his leap they congratulated themselves upon having discovered him in time.

Believing that they were near the place where they had left Red Sticks at the time of their capture, they began a close search of the vicinity.

"Ho!" cried Jack, suddenly halting

Eben sprang to his side.

"There's our game," Jack went on. "There's something human-like lying in that bunch of grass."

Eben, who had picked up a stick a short time before, advanced cautiously, closely followed by his friend.

"Here he is, Jack!" he called out.

"But he's dead!" Jack instantly gasped.

With his heart in his throat, Eben bent over the figure on the ground and looked with all eyes.

"He's all right!" he exclaimed, in transports of glee. "The bonds held the old fellow all right."

A pair of dark eyes looked at them in utter astonishment, but at the same time there was a mute appeal in the deep-set orbs. The many hours in which Red Sticks had lain there unable to loosen his thongs had to some extent softened his savage nature, and he no longer seemed the human beast he had been for years.

"White boys cruel," he said, in low tones. "Red Sticks suffer much."

"It wasn't our fault," answered Eben. "We couldn't turn you over to the war party that took us prisoners, for that would be losing you entirely."

"How boys get away?"

"They made us run the gantlet [illegible] Girty's bidding, and when we reached the post we kept right on."

"White boys have good heads," commented Red Sticks. "Now what will they do with the Miami?"

"Just what we intended to do all along—take you to General Wayne."

"Young Yengees have hard time to get Red Sticks."

"You did your part in the hunt," Eben replied. "You don't care to go to Mad Anthony, I suppose?"

"Red Sticks go now."

"That's sensible," Jack put in.

"Where guns?"

"We were robbed of them, of course, but we've got good clubs capable of cracking the hardest skull in the wilderness."

Within a few minutes they had the Miami upon his feet, and he smiled for the first time. He seemed tractable, but the boys knew that the Indian can dissemble, and felt that he needed the closest watching.

"Now for camp," said Eben. "I hope our troubles are over. We've found our lost prize, and nothing but death shall separate us now."

With this they started off with Red Sticks between them. They realized that danger still lurked on every side, for "there is many a slip twixt cup and lip."

CHAPTER XII.

THE END OF THE HUNT.

NOW that fate or fortune—call it what you will—had again placed the slippery Red Sticks in their hands, Eben and Jack resolved that there should be no more escapes. At the same time they could not but realize that there were yet dangers to overcome, and it behooved them to exert the greatest care in their future movements. The American Army still lay in the Maumee country, and General Wayne was completing his plans for the chastisement of the Indians who had disturbed the border so long. An English fort stood near the American camp, and Wayne knew that the British were secretly aiding the savages, altho there was no war between the United States and Great Britain.

Jack and Eben regretted the lack of weapons, for they had lost theirs in the last capture and, armed with nothing but stout clubs, they were compelled to put up with what they had—poor defenses at the best.

Red Sticks felt his position bitterly. He marched along, every now and then glancing savagely at his captors, who never took their keen young eyes from him.

"You don't like Tom Girty?" said Jack, after a long silence.

The Miami's teeth came together with emphasis.

"Me no like the white snake. Me kill him some day," was the growling answer.

"You'll have to beat a white man's bullet then," Eben put in.

"The Miami's bullet is as swift as the white man's," Red Sticks flashed.

Further conversation was dropped at this point, for the little party had reached the bank of a wilderness stream which seemed to sing as it rushed beneath the trees.

Suddenly Eben came to a halt and clutched Jack's arm. He had discovered a little column of smoke which ascended lazily to the tops of the trees.

Taking their prisoner with them, the boys crept cautiously forward, and perceived three young warriors seated around a fire over which they were roasting some venison.

"They're but boys," said Jack, in a whisper.

"Yes, and they have rifles."

"The very things we want," Eben replied. "We must possess ourselves of their weapons, and then we will be armed."

The boy braves were so intent upon the promised feast that they did not see the figures that approached them from tree to tree, and when the young rangers burst out into the open with wild yells, the trio sprang to their feet in amazement.

"Surrender!" shouted Eben, as he snatched up one of the rifles. "We've got the whole Yengee Army behind us——"

"Yes, and others are coming on!" cried Jack. "You are our prisoners!"

The young redskins did not attempt flight, but gave in with the best grace they could command, and the rangers had the very weapons they so much needed

"Now," Eben said, addressing their captives, "you can go."

The Indians looked wistfully at the tempting meat and hesitated.

"Stay then and eat your fill," Eben resumed, seeing that they were hungry. "My advice is to keep away from Mad Anthony Wayne in the big fight that is near at hand, for he is going to sweep every redskin from the face of the earth."

"Red Sticks hungry," said the Miami, at this juncture, but Eben shook his head.

"You'll get plenty to eat by and by," said he. "I've no doubt that General Wayne will give you a royal feast," and presently the march was resumed.

They were now about out of the danger zone, and two hours later they caught sight of a number of stalwart men in buckskin, at which their hearts bounded for joy.

With ejaculations of happiness they bounded forward, and in a little while were within the American lines.

"Shoot me for a coon!" suddenly exclaimed a loud voice. "In the name of Saint Peter, how did you get out o' the red tangle?"

"By luck and pluck, Mr. Simpson," replied Jack, grinning with delight. "[illegible] see we've got the big red gent[illegible] with us."

Obed Simpson took another step forward and leered into Red Stick's face.

"Hang me for a muskrat, if you haven't!" he cried. "We'd given you up, war sure your scalps war dangling somewhar in Indiandom——"

"Look at our heads and you see that they've got hair on yet, Mr. Simpson."

"Wal, it beats my time all holler."

A few minutes later the boys presented themselves before General Wayne, who had to take a second look before he could realize the situation. Mad Anthony did not attempt to conceal his pleasure.

"You ought to be made major generals," was his almost boisterous exclamation, as he seized the young rangers' hands in his bearlike grasp. "I always thought you'd bring in Red Sticks, tho Simpson gave you up for lost."

Then he turned to the taciturn captive, whom he regarded with keen satisfaction.

"You're safe here," he said, addressing the Miami. "We won't have you to fight tomorrow, and your warriors will go into the battle half-hearted."

"White boys brave," responded Red Sticks, glancing at his captors. "They no stop till they get Red Sticks."

"That's what I sent them out for," chuckled Wayne. Then, calling one of his head officers to his side, he ordered him to convey to the Indian camp information of Red Stick's capture, with the threat that if the Miamis opposed him in the battle he would have their chief killed and scalped.

The next day Wayne's army moved forward to one of the greatest border battles ever fought on this continent. The woods of the Maumee resounded to the terrific crash of musketry, and charge after charge was made till the Indians fled pell-mell before the victorious Americans. It was noticed that, just as Wayne expected, the Miamis took but little part in the fight, and that the efforts of Tecumseh and Turkey Foot could not keep them in the field.

Such a crushing defeat as Wayne delivered was never sustained by the allied tribes of the Northwest. They left hundreds of their braves in the battle of the Fallen Timbers.

"Look yonder!" cried Eben, who was fighting at Jack's side. "Yonder is that merciless demon. I'm going to settle scores with him right now."

Tom Girty, who was trying to rally the flying redskins, made a splendid mark for a rifleman, and Eben, with the coolness of an old scout, drew a bead on the white renegade. In a second his rifle had added to the din of battle, and a figure crumpled up on the forest leaves.

The days of Tom Girty were ended and, so far as he was concerned, the women and children of the frontier were safe. It was a fitting end for such a villain.

"I wonder what Mad Anthony is going to do with our old friend Red Sticks?" remarked Eben, at the close of the fight.

"Trust the old General for that," answered Jack.

After such a victory Mad Anthony could afford to be lenient, but when he ordered Red Sticks brought before him, that wily savage expected to be shot.

"Go back to your tribe," said Wayne, in gentle tones. "You have greatly contributed to our triumph, thanks to my two brave young rangers. Tell your people that if they again rise against the whites the buzzards will pick the bones of every Indian in the forest."

Red Sticks held out his hands.

"Me no more fight against the palefaces," he declared. "So long as Red Sticks lives he will never forget the kindness of the man who never sleeps."

The American Army watched a single Indian disappear in the forest, and that was the last they ever saw of the great sachem of the Miamis. He kept his promise to the letter, and from that day counseled peace and did much to keep the border unstained with blood.

One day both Jack and Eben received a letter which they opened with breathless haste. It was from President Washington, who thanked them for their services in capturing Red Sticks, for General Wayne had reported their famous exploit to the Father of His Country.

Some time later, when Jack had built for himself and Miss a pretty home on the banks of the rippling Maumee, two boys might have been seen sitting under the forest trees. What did they talk about? We may imagine a great deal, but it would be safe to say that they recounted the one grand adventure of their lives—the hunt for Red Sticks, the powerful chief of the Miamis.

The End.

* * *

Too Thrifty.

SECRETARY OF WAR BAKER tells a story of a country youth who was driving to the county fair with his sweetheart when they passed a booth where fresh popcorn was for sale.

"My! Abner, ain't that nice?" said the girl.

"Ain't what nice?" asked Abner.

"Why, the popcorn; it smell so awfully good," replied the girl.

"It does smell kind o' fine," drawled the youth. "I'll jest drive a little closer so you can get a better smell."

A New Serial for Boys

NEXT week the Ledger will begin publication of a splendid boys' serial. It is called "By Paths of Peril" and Dan A. Keller, the author, has put some really exciting adventures in it. If you think a boy has to go outside of town to have exciting times read this story and see what can happen to him in a big city.

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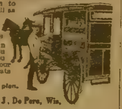

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The Flight of Time

MRS. WILLIAMSON threw down the semi-weekly newspaper from her home town with such impatience that Williamson removed his pipe to ask what had ruffled her usual calm.

"That settles it!" she replied. "You can write tonight and cancel our subscription to this old paper. We've been living in Chicago so long now that it is positively foolish to have this relic of the past mailed to us every Friday."

"I don't quite understand," Williamson protested mildly.

"Well, haven't you seen that Gazette? Didn't you see where little Kate Watkins was married?"

"Yes. What of it? She's old enough now."

"That's it! Old enough! And the year we moved away little Kate Watkins was in kindergarten! Since that time she has been graduated from grammar school, high school and goodness knows what else. And now she's married. It makes me feel as grown up and old as Methuselah's twin sister."

"Did you see that rather long article there about Alvin S. Brown?" Williamson inquired.

"Yes—with a whole string of capital letters after his name. It said 'Dr. Brown' had written scientific books on astronomy. And, besides, in his spare moments he had collected and translated a volume of rare Latin songs. It said we should be very proud of the distinguished Doctor.

"Now, you know as well as I do," Mrs. Williamson continued, "that Al Brown was nothing but a skinny, barefooted youngster shooting our pigeons with his pesky little rifle when we lived back home. And his collection of freckles of all sizes was the most extraordinary thing about him.

"And I noticed that Mrs. P. G. Taylor and little granddaughter visited somewhere or other last week. The idea of Lucy Taylor being a grandmother! It's absurd! Lucy and I went to school together. I always think of her as the same young girl and——"

"Oh, I see," Williamson commented. "We've been away from there so long you can't realize how everybody has aged. You couldn't expect them to remain at a standstill."

"No, of course not," Mrs. Williamson admitted, "but as long as I don't hear anything different, I continue to hold the picture in my mind of my friends just as I left them.

"It doesn't bother me when I read that Mrs. Swissle gave a party or that John Weebles has had the grip, because they always used to give parties and have the grip.

"But I can't bear to read about mere babies getting married and lanky kids being doctors and my girlhood chums being grandmothers. There is a continual suggestion of unreality about it."

"I understand now," Williamson said, "you feel like the same young girl who married me more than a couple of dozen years ago until the news items from home force other thoughts upon you."

"And then I can feel the weight of time swinging from my shoulders. It makes my very cheeks sag."

"You really do feel and look much younger than a lot of women I know who were born a good while since you were. But you can't very well deny having grown up and raised a family yourself. Just the same, Margaret, with all the children away, it does seem as if we had moved back to honeymoon days. In another way it seems much longer than two years since our baby Emily was married and went to her own home——. Wait a minute till I see who's ringing the doorbell!"

Williamson went to the door and returned reading a yellow slip of paper. It was a telegram, which he handed his wife with trembling fingers. She read this message: "Ten-pound boy arrived 8:30 p. m. Come along and shake hands with your first grandchild."

Five minutes of emotional relaxation were followed by half an hour of thoughtful silence before Mrs. Williamson arose to pack her traveling bag.

As she left the room she said: "I guess, John, you'd better sit down and renew our subscription to the Gazette. And in your letter to the editor you might mention Emily's boy."

Down on the Farm

BY EARL H. EMMONS.

The Silo.

THE silo is a clever device designated for the purpose of deceiving the livestock into eating garbage which they ordinarily would not touch. In the olden days the silo was simply a hole in the ground, and sometimes nothing more than a large sack, but as the farmer prospered he was taught that this crude method was no good, because it cost nothing, and he was educated to the use of something just as good but more expensive.

At first the patent silo was constructed of wood, like a large barrel, but the farmer kept making money, and so the cement silo, the tile silo, the cast-iron silo, the folding pocket silo and other ingenious inventions came into use, and the farmer is not nearly so wealthy as he would have been had these things never been discovered.

The supposed purpose of the silo is to give the livestock canned fruit in the winter, thereby treating them like other folks, and the unsophisticated cows and horses believe this, but as a matter of fact the silo is a clearing house for garbage, and the poor animals do not know what is being put over on them.

In the fall, after the corn is picked and the fields are filled with old stalks, weeds, cockleburs and miscellaneous rubbish, the silo comes into use, and all of this junk is carefully gathered and placed in it and mixed with salt, while four hired men with big feet and dirty shoes tramp over the mess and pack it down. The cows are out in the pasture at this time, however, and do not see these depredations, or they would not eat the stuff.

After the silo is filled and all the air kicked out of it, the lid is put on tight, and the mixture is allowed to stand until it ferments; then the victims are turned in. Naturally the farm animals smell the salt and incidentally the other odors, but they do not know this comes from the hired man's feet, so they chew up the mess, trying to get the salt out, and when they become tired they have unconsciously consumed so much ensilage that they have no room for anything else, and thus the farmer saves some more corn and hay.

Sometimes, however, the stuff stands a little too long, and becomes restless from overfermentation. Then, when the gentle-faced mooley cow fills her system with it, she staggers away from the place, lets out a couple of whoops, waltzes off on one heel, and cuts up scandalous, thereby accumulating a bad reputation.

Outside of this and one or two other little drawbacks, the silo is a profitable success, altho it is a mean way to make scavengers out of the livestock.

Among the other little annoyances which may develop is the chance that the silo may get an air hole in it, which promptly causes the canned goods to undergo a sudden and awful change in disposition, and if the cow monkeys with it then, she promptly swells up like a balloon, ties her legs into knots, tries to breathe in all the air in the pasture, and climbs the golden stairs, which makes a substantial entry on the loss side of the ledger.

The next in this humorous series will be entitled "The Grape." It will appear in the Ledger of next week.

Spot Cash.

"THE first person who makes a spot on this nice, clean tablecloth will have to pay a fine of ten cents," decreed Mrs. Budd, proprietress of the Budd boarding-house, challenging with a glance the assembled guests.

"What about the second person?" asked the inquisitive boarder.

"The second person," declared the landlady, "will have to pay twenty cents. I'm so glad you mentioned it."

"Who gets the money?" inquired the boarder in arrears.

"I'll tell you," suggested the sporty boarder. "We will tax each fellow ten cents for every spot he makes on the tablecloth and the fellow who makes the fewest spots gets the money."

"That would be gambling," suggested the intolerant boarder.

"And when men start gambling they never know when to stop," declared the professor. "Now, when I went to college the fellows in my dormitory had a way of putting jam on nickels. They would set the nickels out in a row and the fellow whose nickel first attracted a fly got all the other fellows' nickels."

"I would never stand for anything like that here!" declared Mrs. Budd. "But I do think it would be a good idea for each guest to pay a forfeit of 10 cents for each spot on the tablecloth——"

"You should charge according to size," observed the legal-minded boarder. "Otherwise a fellow who had been so unfortunate as to have made two or more spots could blot them all out with one big spot to cover the whole business and save money."

"The funds thus raised," continued the landlady, "could be devoted to some community investment, such as a phonograph or a checker board or something we could all enjoy."

"We could put a bowl in the center of the table," enthused the pretty teacher, "and each offender could drop his or her dime into the bowl immediately upon committing the offense."

"Good!" exclaimed the sporty boarder. "And we could keep right on sweetening the cady until there was enough to buy what we wanted. How would a moving picture outfit be?"

"I object to the word 'cady,'" declared the intolerant boarder. "I do not understand the term, but I'm sure I would not like to allude to our funds by such language."

"Then what would you call this bowl of money? Can you think of any better name?" asked the sporty boarder.

"We might allude to it as spot cash," vouchsafed the reckless boarder. And then the reckless boarder's hand slipped on the gravy dish and made several spots upon the fresh clean cloth.

* * *

Vanity.

"I have never met," he said, "more than two really lovely women."

"Ah!" she said, looking up innocently, "who was the other?"

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A Bachelor's Christmas

ELBERT WHITMAN'S great house sprawled out in wings and incongruous additions, each an artistic production in itself, but with an ensemble that presented a huge pile that lacked the grace of harmony.

The present proprietor was a cynical, crabbed, money-grabbing old bachelor. The human ties that should have softened his nature congealed and hardened it. He was a scholar and lived with his books and papers, but his constant search was for things from which he could dissent. It was painful for him to agree with the views of any one else.

There was not the slightest difficulty in gaining an estimate how this man was held in the community. Every evening in the village store he was brought under discussion by one suggestion or another. At one of these gossip sessions a little Englishman who had worked on the farm from daylight to dark for a whole season declared that "Old Hel Whitman is the biggest 'og on two legs and nothing less, so 'elp me," and from that on it was "Old Hel Whitman" with all the unregenerate.

At the quilting bees and church socials the women found endless material for comment and denunciation in the grim bachelor, who never seemed to care one whit what the world thought of him. The venerable couple in charge of the house would go weeks without a word from the master except by way of orders, and the boy Tom, who had in some way wormed into the household as independent help and general mischief maker, was often busiest at dodging kicks and cuffs, laughing as tho it was some game, and going right ahead in his merry, boyish ways as if nothing had happened. Elbert Whitman used to harden his heart and mentally castigate himself for almost liking the handsome lad.

One morning, when the snowflakes were in the air and a keen chill pervaded the house, Tom, while piling wood into the grate, ventured: "Christmas will soon be here."

"What of it? Christmas is no more than any other day. Don't mention the subject again. Pagan observance. Lot of foolery. People spend money that they can't afford and meanly begrudge what they give. If there ever comes an age when the people have good sense there will be no Christmas."

"I suppose you're right, Mr. Whitman. You know more than anybody else," innocently. "I'm expecting a present."

"For an addle-headed young scapegrace to indorse my opinion puts me in doubt. I'll think the thing over," replied his employer, sarcastically.

"It might be," he went on musingly, "that second childhood would inoculate me with the Christmas fever. And you, you mercenary young rascal, are counting on a present. You'll not get it. I have enough to do in feeding, clothing and housing you. Youth is the period of ingratitude and——"

"Not from you, Mr. Whitman; from the schoolteacher that you wouldn't lend books to or help her give an entertainment Christmas eve. Of course you were right, because you never lend anything but money, but the neighbors say that it was a mean, stingy trick."

"D-ee-lighted, I'm sure," chuckling and rubbing his thin hands. "I never feel so well as when the world disapproves. Get out of here, you grinning jackanapes," and Tom did not escape a kick by more than three sheer inches. He had dared to laugh.

"Confounded imp," ran the thoughts of the scholastic bachelor. "Agreed with me about Christmas. Agreed that I was consistent in refusing the little schoolteacher my books. Thorn in the flesh, that boy. Unnatural, but I'm glad that last kick failed to reach him."

Tom ushered in a neighboring farmer who briefly stated that he would be glad to defer paying some interest until after the holidays. He wanted to remember some of his folks, help the school entertainment and give something to the teacher, who had a little sister visiting her. "Out there in my cutter now," concluded the farmer, "and as nice a couple as you ever see. Reg'lar gentle people is what I'd call 'em."

"I have perfect confidence in your judgment," sneered the holder of the mortgage. "Probably descended from royalty. But there'll be no deferring of interest to let you be generous on my money. I expect it the day it falls due."

"To be sure. It's your right. I might a knowed better than to ask it. Guess Christmas shouldn't count with the likes o' me."

"Hel" Whitman started in to argue the matter, for it hurt him to let any statement go uncontradicted, when something happened. In rushed a rosy-cheeked, red-hooded, joyous little tot with sparkling eyes and dancing feet.

"How b'ooful," as she took in the pictures, blazing wood fire, warm rug and general air of comfort. "Me wants to det warm," as she sprang with the fearlessness of childhood into the lap of the astounded bachelor. In his amazement he yielded for a second to the cling of soft little arms, and only recovered when soft lips were pressed to his.

"Tom, take this baby to the kitchen. I have business with Mr. Daley."

"Me's doin' to stay," as she nestled closer. "Me's a little Laurwa."

"Laura who?" huskily, and while he was hustling her into Tom's arms.

"Dus' Laurwa. You is such a cwoss man. Merwy Trismas!"

He studied her face with a scowl as she was carried out, throwing kisses, and then curtly transacted his business by getting the money and giving a receipt. But Whitman was not himself and in his most controversial mood.

He sought relief in his papers, but they were full of Christmas talk, even to the advertisements. He read an article which condemned the practice of letting children believe in Santa Claus, and snorted his dissent, tho what he read was probably just what he would have written. He read of a woman's organization that deplored and aimed to stop the giving of Christmas presents. He stamped the floor, commenting profanely under his breath, yet again the article might have been his own. He lit a cigar, locked the door and stretched his length in an easy chair before the fire. The cigar dropped from his fingers and he slept.

Then a vision. A spirit appeared to him proclaiming itself the true spirit of Christmas. It deplored the traditional observance of the day, denounced as foolish the practice of making little ones happy instead of hardening them for the stern realities of life, ridiculed the idea that hearts should be attuned to charity or that it was the duty of any one to relieve the sorrow and distress which an inscrutable Providence had visited upon others.

It was "Hel" Whitman's opportunity. Here was a chance for argument in which to revel. He blithely assailed the spirit as an emissary of the devil, waxed eloquent on making beautiful the lives of children, on bringing good cheer and happiness to the homes of the unfortunate and excoriated the skinflint who hoarded while others were starving, freezing and struggling against hopeless odds. He thought of the baby that had trustfully sought his arms and fairly roared forth the sublimest doctrine of "Peace on earth and good will toward man."

He sprang up to throw the evil spirit thru the window, and awoke, trembling with indignation and perspiring with the heat of a discussion that completely reversed his character. He tried to laugh but there was no mirth in the sound. For an hour he groped in search of his stern old self, but thru the indulgence of his love of controversy he had converted himself. For the first time in many years he felt lonely and disconsolate in a way that his books or his wealth could not relieve. He had a hungry yearning for companionship, sympathy and love.

"Here, Tom," he shouted as he opened the door, "get the carriage. We're going to the village. Put your best clothes on, my boy."

"These are my best, my only," with that irresistibly cheery laugh

"W-h-at? We'll attend to that. How much money have you?

"Nickel," with another ringing laugh "Been saving it two months for Christmas."

"Here," as he pushed an uncounted roll of bills into the boy's hand, "you must have clothes, hat, shoes, shirts, neckties, collars, and Christmas money and—and let me see, and a hair cut, yes a hair cut," he finished with a real laugh

Tom was worried. Had the man gone suddenly crazy? But it appealed to the boy as an admirable form of lunacy The old carriage was dusted and run out in short order. The village stopped work to see "Hel" Whitman going to the store in a carriage. Men that were seldom idle gathered in while the big man bought about all there was desirable in the establishment.

In the midst of the excitement he made a startling announcement:

"Gentlemen," in the magnetic voice which had so long been a neglected gift, "I'm going to give a Christmas party up at the house. Everybody is invited. No lines are drawn, you know. We are all either men, women or children and it is a universal right to be happy on that glorious day." For a moment his old self glared about as tho issuing a challenge for a joint debate. Then it relaxed into the winning smile that his neighbors had never known. "I mean it, and I think you'll be glad if you come. Going right down to the paper now and issue a blanket invitation."

On the way back there were two stops. One was at the schoolhouse to send in a generous donation for the entertainment, with notice that the teacher had the freedom of the Whitman library. The other was to return the interest money to Daley with notice not to pay a cent until dunned.

The whole community was astounded and dazed. Laden wagons went to the big house and, when Tom was appealed to for some one that could superintend the decorations, he brought the "pretty" teacher, and little "Lauwra" was there in the role of sunshine dispenser.

Tom had introduced her as "Teacher," but Whitman studied the faces of her and the little one with puzzled countenance. There was grand revel at the party. Every one received just the present wanted. Deeds were handed back for farms that had almost been paid for and then seized under foreclosure. There were tears mingled with laughter, but all sprang from joy. The guests never knew that a host could be so genial; much less that Old "Hel" Whitman could take so gracious a part. In one master stroke he had made fast and lasting friends of the enemies that had feared and hated him.

Just before they were to have the big evening feast, he turned with an exaggerated bow, and said: "Miss Teacher, we have not been properly introduced. What is your name, please?"

"Abbie Whitman," and her face went red.

"And the baby is Laura Whitman?" he gasped. "Named for her mother?"

"Yes, Uncle Elbert."

He gathered the two into his arms and said: "Brother Tom married the woman I wanted to marry, and I made the disappointment an excuse for leading a miserable, selfish and lonely life. Now her daughters come to comfort me."

"There are three of us orphans, Uncle Elbert."

"Where's the third? I want her with us"

"I'm her," said Tom, with a gulp, and his response brought back merriment.

"Neighbors," announced Elbert Whitman later on, "these are the other members of my family. Every one a Whitman and I'm proud of it. Come to us when you are in trouble and try to forget that there was an 'Old Hel' Whitman. He's dead."

That night as he went away happy to bed, the bachelor chuckled to himself: "If that imp of a spirit had taken the other side of the argument I would be just as bad as ever."

* * *

The Test.

THEY were sitting on the sand, side by side, looking over the ocean.

"How peaceful it looks!"

"Yes," she said, "but how very wet!"

"True," he observed, "and yet how calm and restful it appears. With you by my side I could sail on forever."

"Yes?" she queried.

"Yes," he affirmed, "forever. Will you, dearest?"

"On one condition," she replied. "I am a cautious girl, and do not wish to be overhasty. But I will let you make the test, and when the test is made and you say it is successful I will go with you."

"And the test, love?" he cried.

"You take a boat and sail on forever, and after you have sailed on forever tell me how it works," she answered.

* * *

Her Complaint.

ELIZA ANN didn't like the place. The people were awfully refined, frightfully suburban, and did things in "style," but Eliza was not content

"Please, 'm," she said one morning, "I wish to give notice."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the mistress, in surprise and dismay. "And what for, pray? Aren't you well treated?"

"Oh, I've nothing to complain of in that way," confessed the maid, frankly; "but—but when I wait at the table there is too much changing of the plates for the amount of food we have!"

* * *

Too Personal.

UPON the recent death of an American politician, who at one time served his country in a very high legislative place, a number of newspaper men were collaborating on an obituary notice.

"What shall we say of the former Senator?" asked one of the men.

"Oh, just put down that he was always faithful to his trust."

"And," queried a cynical member of the group, "shall we mention the name of the trust?"

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Write today for 12 packs Smith's Hair Tonic to sell at 10c per [illegible]. Return $1.20 and [illegible] wedding ring and bracelet, warranted.

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OUR NEIGHBORS IN ILLINOIS

Tell About a New Discovery.

Many local people are glad to testify to the good results obtained from Anuric, the discovery of Doctor Pierce of the Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., for kidney and bladder disorders, backache, rheumatism and all uric acid troubles. This is what Mr. Walter Carlson of 1160 Sedgwick Street, Chicago, Ill., says:

"I suffered for four years with pain in my back. I tried everything there was out but they all failed to help me. I even went to a doctor and he could not cure my backache. A friend of mine advised me to try a box of Dr. Pierce's Anuric Tablets, and so I did; I used two boxes and the pains were gone. I am not telling any lie—the pain in my back was something terrible. As soon as I would bend over to get something from the floor I thought my whole back would burst.

"I would advise sufferers to try Anuric and they will find results; they need not take my word for it."

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When the kidneys are weak or diseased, these natural filters do not cleanse the blood sufficiently, and the poisons are carried to all parts of the body. There follow depression, aches and pains, heaviness, drowsiness, irritability, headaches, chilliness and rheumatism. In some people there are sharp pains in the back and loins, distressing bladder disorders and sometimes obstinate dropsy. The uric acid sometimes forms into gravel or kidney stones. When the uric acid affects the tissues, muscles and joints, it causes lumbago, rheumatism, gout or sciatica. This is the time to try Anuric, double strength, the discovery of Doctor Pierce, for kidney trouble and pains in back and all over body! Send Dr. Pierce, Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., 10c. for trial package to prove to you that Anuric is many times more potent than lithia and eliminates the uric acid from the system as hot water melts sugar.

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D. D. D. Prescription

A soothing, healing liquid wash that [illegible] of Eczema, Psoriasis, ringworm, bad leg, pimples [illegible] will yield to its cooling, healing effect [illegible] D. D. D. sinks through the pores, kills and washes [illegible] disease germs. Salves merely clog the pores and encourage the rapid growth of germs [illegible] pores open to receive nature's healing aid [illegible]

Testimonial

I never hesitate to recommend a really [illegible] ents per [illegible] gardless of professional "ethics," therefore, I [illegible] to say, that for several years past I have [illegible] practice a considerable quantity of the D. D. D. Prescription in diseases of the s[illegible] superior in efficacy to any sin[illegible] It is indeed a reliable [illegible] relieving at once the intense itching, [illegible] d thereby strengthening the [illegible] in my opinion should be [illegible] the family physician, espec[illegible]

P. S.—S[illegible] case of eczema in a [illegible] large sum of money [illegible] Of course I was anxious to cu[illegible] knowledge of your Prescription and used it [illegible] was that my patient began to improve, but [illegible] my drug [illegible] my orders [illegible]

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PLANNING THE PARTY

"DON'T you think our club, the Dix Amies, should give some sort of a Christmas party?" I asked Polly Gray.

"Yes, it would be nice. Why didn't you suggest it, Lucile?"

"Because I wished to have some novel idea to present—and, to tell you the truth, I haven't thought of anything yet. Don't you think that if you and I put our heads together we could conjure up something interesting?"

"Perhaps we could, but when shall I ever see you, Lucile?"

"If I were urged," I replied, laughingly, "I might go to your house to dinner tonight."

"We dine at 6. Come early," she called as she ran to her street car.

I did start early, but I thought it a good opportunity to call on the Harleys, who live in the same neighborhood. Just as I was saying good-by to Florence Ted Harley came in, and as he is extremely genial and amusing I was easily beguiled into staying a half hour longer.

"Well, I'm certainly glad you're here," said Polly when I was taking off my wraps in her house. "I had begun to fear that something had happened to you."

"I hope I'm not very late, Polly."

Before she could speak her father's voice rang out from downstairs inquiring impatiently how much longer dinner was to be kept waiting, and I heard Mrs. Gray hushing him with the assurance that "Polly's guest had arrived." I felt sorry for Polly and I smiled at her sympathetically.

Mr. Gray's temper melted away with the soup and we had a pleasant little dinner. Then, after a short time in the living-room, Polly's parents left us alone to discuss our ideas for the Dix Amies party. We talked for a long time without reaching any decision. Polly was in favor of the dansant, but as my heart was set on having a costume party I thought that a dinner dance would be much better and more worth while. I reminded her that it is always difficult to get men out for daytime affairs.

"I don't believe there are a half-dozen men among those who usually go to our club festivities who would put on fancy dress in the afternoon."

"You are probably right, Lucile. It would be better at night. But aren't we a trifle presumptuous to assume that the Dix Amies will give any kind of a function we may suggest?"

"If we have a detailed plan ready to present, and you make the motion to adopt it and I second it, we shall have no trouble in carrying it thru. Dear me, it must be nearly time for me to go home. What time is it, Polly?"

"Ten minutes after 11," she answered.

"Mercy, how the time has galloped this evening. I meant to call up Lyman Hurlburd and ask him to come for me if he could conveniently, but now it's too late to 'phone him or anybody else."

"You had better stay all night."

"Thank you, Polly, but I can't, really."

"Why not? It's awfully late for you even to think of going home alone."

"Of course, I couldn't go alone, but I really must go. Mother would be frightfully worried if she did not hear me come in, Polly."

"You can telephone her."

"And wake up the whole household! Oh, no, I can't do that. I have to be more considerate of dear grandmother, who is so nervous that if she is disturbed in the middle of the night she scarcely gets another wink of sleep till morning. You see, it's quite impossible for me to stay. You understand, don't you, Polly?"

"Yes," she replied, looking troubled. "Run up to my room and put on your things, Lucile, and I'll speak to father."

Mr. Gray's deep voice has wonderful carrying power and I heard him ex[illegible] "Great Scot, this time of night! [illegible] was just going to bed. I've got [illegible] slippers. Hang it, why doesn't [illegible] all night or why doesn't her [illegible] come for her?"

[illegible] continued, after murmurs [illegible] mother which I could [illegible]ly, "I wish I had a daughter [illegible] considerate of me."

[illegible], I took care not to show [illegible] that I had overheard Mr. [illegible] I knew it would [illegible] did not take his [illegible] seriously, for I'm quite [illegible] middle-aged men [illegible] privilege to grumble at [illegible] their fam[illegible] they don't [illegible] could [illegible] entertaining in the taxi going home that he would forget any little disinclination he had had. But, to my great surprise, he did not call a machine. He took me way across town in a thru route street car. It was such a tiresome trip that I felt in no mood to [illegible] to break thru his frigid [illegible] I simply cannot understand economics of this kind.

I [illegible] certainly glad to be in my own [illegible]ying all night with a friend unless there is some important reason. I like my own bed and my own bath. I like to find myself at home in the morning, where I can slip into my own soft negligee and plan my day over my rolls and coffee. Sometimes I think my really ideal love of home is quite old-fashioned.

LOST, STRAYED, STOLEN.

I bent to kiss the saucy lass,
  But from my touch she quickly bounded,
And nothing could my pain surpass
  As on the air the smack resounded.
Alas! to be thus sadly crossed—
A perfect osculation lost!

Again the pleasant task I tried,
  And now the maiden moved more slowly;
My lips were to her ear applied—
  At least I had not missed her wholly!
Oh, cruel and contrary maid—
Too far this kiss of mine had strayed!

But then, as some keen hunter snares
  His prey, and on it slyly slips,
I caught the damsel unawares
  And kissed her squarely on the lips.
Ah, heart with joy and triumph swollen—
There is no kiss like one that's stolen!

* * *

Pity Father.

CARL, aged 3, and his baby sister of 16 months slept in the same room as their parents. Carl woke up early and tormented his still sleepy father with questions.

"Father, can a cow speak?"

"No, my child."

"Father, can a dog speak?"

The father, thinking Carl was going thru the entire list of animals that he knew, said severely:

"No animal can speak. And you must now keep quiet, for father wants to sleep."

For a long time the child remained quiet; then being no longer able to restrain his curiosity, he asked timidly:

"Father, what kind of an animal is baby?"

* * *

Practice Makes Perfect.

A YOUNG Burnley weaver, according to an English paper, was taking her little baby to church to be christened.

Its father had been in the trenches for three months, and it was impossible for him to get home for the ceremony.

The baby smiled up beautifully into the minister's face.

"Well, madam," said the minister, "I must congratulate you on your little one's behavior. I have christened two thousand babies, but I never christened one that behaved so well as yours."

The young mother smiled demurely, and said:

"His grandad and me hev' bin practisin' wi' him fer a week wi' a bucket of water!"

* * *

Might Drink Another.

DINNER was a little late. A guest asked the hostess to play something. Seating herself at the piano, the good woman executed a Chopin nocturne with precision. She finished, and there was still an interval of waiting to be bridged. In the silence she turned to an old gentleman on her right side and said: "Would you like a sonata before dinner?"

He gave a start of surprise and pleasure. "Why, yes, thanks!" he said. "I had a couple on my way here, but I think I could drink another."

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Cream of the crop. Rich, ripe, natural leaf cured in the old-fashioned Kentucky way. Aged and mellowed in huge wooden casks; fragrant as a rose. Free from all adulterants that undermine the health.

Harry Close, Carrollton, O., writes: "Please send me 5 pounds of that good, old Kentucky tobacco. Have tried every kind any one could mention but have never yet found any that would compare with yours."

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Write us today—send no money, not even a stamp. Just your name and permanent address, and we will send you **absolutely free** a package of Zemeto. If it conquers your disease, you need pay us nothing—just tell your friends what it did for you. **Show this advertisement to your friends, as it may not appear again.**
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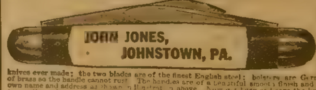

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Free Proof To You

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GENTLE JABS.

Chalk in the milk is a white lie.

Let us tarry a while at the sign of the smile.

The less a man knows the more suspicious he is.

Nothing makes a boy so weak as a strong cigar.

If love is blind how can there be love at first sight?

Sooner or later every man bumps into his stone wall.

We never know how happy we were until we aren't.

Most people are two-faced and a few are three-faced.

A small man dodges when he meets a great opportunity.

One man's success is often due to the failure of another.

Some men seek justice and others have it forced upon them.

Some men's honesty is the result of lack of opportunity.

Cold cash warms a marble heart, but the effect is temporary.

If you are wise today you can risk being otherwise tomorrow.

After reaching the top a man ceases to talk about the room there.

Fortunate is the man who can give a good bank account of himself daily.

A stiff upper lip doesn't amount to much if the lower jaw is too limber.

Misfortune comes often to the man who makes no effective effort to see it first.

Many a man who thinks he is thinking is merely rehearsing the thoughts of another.

Some men make fortunes out of old things, and others starve while trying to invent new ones.

About the time a man begins to have good common sense old age makes him childish and he can't use it.

Any girl who punctuates a love letter is mistaken in thinking there is something the matter with her heart.

Many a man can see where his wife would have made a splendid railway section boss but for the accident of birth.

When a man forgets to ask his wife whether she needs any money it is a sure sign that the honeymoon is on the wane.

It is said that men who never drink, smoke or stay out late at night live to a ripe old age. Perhaps that's their punishment.

However, the man who thinks he is going to have his own way after marriage is apt to have another think coming in after years.

SHE'S HAPPY AMID WAR'S RAVAGES

THE interior of a home in Trosley, France, reconstructed by the French soldiers. A member of the American committee is hearing the experiences of this old French peasant woman who is very happy at again having this little house in which she can live.

FROM "OVER THERE."

THE following letter from an American girl in England to her sister in this country gives a vivid picture of life "over there" at present:

My Dear Sis: Well, I'm just back from my week-end in the country. I had begun to think that close-clipped sloping lawns and trim laurel hedges were things of long ago, and I can tell you it was a wonderful experience after the rush of war work and the suspense in which we live here in town to wander thru sunken lanes in Kent on a sunny Sunday morning in November, with the beech and the plane trees shedding their golden rain of leaves down into the stillness all about.

For a while I actually forgot for the first time since I arrived in England that there was war and famine not seventy miles away in Belgium, and I began to talk of pleasant things. Then an airplane buzzed overhead far up in the blue and brought me back to realities, which were further driven home when we reached the beautiful old church of Speldhurst, where the congregation was just coming out from service. The men were all in khaki, or hospital blue; there were so many of them, sprinkled around among the women and in groups by themselves. It reminded me of pictures I used to see of the Pilgrim Fathers coming out of meeting-house in New England with prayer books and guns. The services ended with the national anthem, which made me feel homey, for it's the tune of "America," you know.

In the afternoon we walked in the garden at the foot of the lawn. It used to be a blaze of flowers right up to Christmas time, but now the beds are filled with vegetables. As we chatted about the food outlook we heard the boom of the Flanders guns. The sound came in waves and was so monotonous that after the first shock it gave me I had to pay close attention to notice it. That was how we who have not lost anybody felt. But presently when the whole party assembled for tea I noticed that one of the women who had lost her only son quite recently seemed to quiver at every distant boom. The talk was not a bit suppressed; all the women spoke quite frankly of the men they have lost and every woman there was right up to the minute in war news.

Country life in England has changed just as much if not more than town life. In lots of houses where servants used to be a necessity one daughter now does the work. Another is away nursing or working in munitions. Another raises vegetables for the winter's provision.

When we went down to the village next morning to do the day's marketing, there was not a shop which had not been completely reorganized since the war. The bakeries and butchers' shops usually shut up by noon, for there is no excess supply, and in the afternoon the woman who is in charge either gets in her stock for the next day or does some sort of voluntary war work. I just dreaded speaking to all my old friends. About every woman all down the picturesque little street was bereaved. I think perhaps the most heartbreaking among them was Mrs. Dykes, the apple-cheeked dame who kept the vegetable stall. Her man has not been heard of for seventeen weeks, and while we were talking she kept peering down the road as if she expected somebody, and whenever her little boy would stray out of sight she would dart after him and bring him back to her side. "He mustn't be round the corner when his daddy comes back, ma'am," she explained.

Before I came over I heard rather depressing stories of the downfall of morals in rural England, where the big training camps are, but questions I asked brought out nothing of the sort.

There was plenty of "walking out" Sunday afternoon on the common, and a jollier lot of young people I have never seen. They laughed and sang and seemed particularly fond of going along in bunches and playing games like children at a party, and most of the girls had their knitting along. We were with the children from our house, and in no time nursemaids and babies and Tommies were all engaged in a sort of drop-the-handkerchief game, which seemed to be the greatest fun.

Another thing I must tell you, Sis, to show you there isn't much "military swagger" around these parts. I arrived late from London. There are no motors or "traps" (as they call the depot hacks), and I had to tote my heavy grip way out to the house. It was getting dusk and a fine mist was beginning to fall. Presently I came upon three wounded musketeers, marching along arm in arm, singing and laughing. But they heard me. One of them stepped back and let me pass. When I had gone some distance I heard a quick limping step, and a boy with a nice voice asked me if I would let him carry my grip as far as our roads ran together. He was so polite that I couldn't refuse. We parted at the cross path, and he dropped back with his cronies while I hurried on.

I'm sending you three patriotic Christmas pudding recipes which I got at Devonshire House the other day when the King's chef was demonstrating for the Ministry of Food.

I wonder if you women at home will do as they are doing over here, having their Christmas now when they are cooking up good things for the soldiers and letting it go at that, without any festive preparations for the actual day. Let me hear if you are running short of wool, for I'll send some if I can.

YOUR LOVING NAN.

THE SOLDIER WOMAN.

A letter from a Washington woman to her sister in Michigan tells how one woman is cooperating with the United States food administration. It runs as follows:

Washington, D. C.—Dear Edith: It was one thing to learn how to use the ordinary leftover, but when it came to enforcing the "clean plate" rule—that was another matter.

I didn't discuss this angle of the problem when talking to Jack and the children in getting them to stop saying, "I don't like," "I can't eat," so that it was quite a surprise to me when our dear retiring Margaret offered a quick solution. She doesn't usually say much, but she does a lot of thinking in that wise 16-year-old head of hers!

"Of course, food left on our plates can't be used again, which leaves no way out except to see that there is no such thing," she suggested.

Whereupon Jack giggled appreciatively.

"Right you are, Kittens!" he assured her, but looked to me for a definite plan.

"How stupid of me!" I exclaimed, a bit ashamed that I had been puzzled by so simple a problem.

"I had not quite understood why the food administration was asking us to make smaller rolls and muffins, and to serve smaller cuts of butter and meat, but now that I think of the half-eaten rolls, pieces of meat and other food that finds its way into the garbage can via our individual plates, it's all very clear," I told them.

Whereupon we agreed to a return to that old custom which considered it a mark of ill breeding to leave food on the plate, and made a new commandment, to-wit: Take no more than you intend to eat!

As to my share of carrying out this program, I shall, of course, see that rolls and muffins are smaller; that slices of bread are cut thin and cut on the table as required, and that no one is overserved. Let them ask for more if they want it.

Formerly the family has turned up its nose at combinations of leftovers, but now that they have all promised to stand by me it's going to be much easier, and I strongly suspect that the advantage to Jack's pocketbook is going to be such that he will be as eager as I am to make the war program one for life, especially since it means intelligent planning rather than any bugaboo of skimping.

Isn't it an inspiring thing—this wonderful plan for the mobilization of American women?

Love to you and yours always, from

FRANCES.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

Somewhere in France: 'Tis all that I may know
Of him, my hero, with the first to go
Where duty to his country's high emprise
Called to the answering manhood in his eyes,
As calleth deep unto the depths below.

For him there was no waiting for the slow
Uncertain summons. In his ear the blow
Of clarion sounded, ringing to the skies,
Somewhere in France.

His soul aflame with service seemed to glow.
He smiled at death, nor shrank from that grim woe
He knew full well was oft the soldier's prize;
Nor may I grieve if so my hero dies
To sleep in fields where blood red poppies grow,
Somewhere in France.

—Robert Adger Bowen.

WOMEN WORTHY OF MEN.

Of only the American forces is it true that their families, relatives and friends will know practically nothing of where they are and what they are doing. The English and French have a system of "leaves," whereby officers and men may leave the camps and battle lines occasionally and return to civilization for brief periods. The streets of London and Paris are constantly peopled with men on leave.

Germany also has a well-ordered system whereby her soldiers may occasionally see their families. London is fairly crowded with women who come there from all parts of the kingdom. And these women are worthy of their men. When the 11 o'clock Continental Express leaves Charing Cross, they are there for a few cheering words—no tears, only smiling faces and waving hands. But unless conditions of publicity are amended the Americans must do their work with the hundreds of thousands vitally interested in them left almost entirely in the dark as to where they are or what they are doing—unless the coming casualty lists be excepted.

NEXT YEAR.

Up and down the street I know,
Now that there is grief and war,
All day long the people go
As they went before:

But when now the lads go by—
Careless look and careless glance—
My heart wonders—"Which shall lie
Still next year in France?"

When the girls go fluttering—
Flushing cheek and tossing head—
My heart says, "Next year shall bring
Which a lover dead?"

Lord, let peace be kind and fleet—
Put an end to grief and war;
Let them walk the little street
Careless as before!

—Margaret Widdemer in Everybody's.

SHOWING OFF.

A shoemaker, getting on well in the way of business, became proud. One day there were a lot of customers in the shop when the shop boy came in to say that the mistress bade him say dinner was ready.

"What's for dinner?" asked the shoemaker.

"Herrings, sir," answered the boy.

"All right," said the shoemaker, and when he went in to dinner he reprimanded the boy for not mentioning something decent and big, telling the boy in future always to mention a good feed when there were any people in the shop.

A few days after the boy came to say that dinner was ready.

"What's for dinner?" asked the shoemaker.

"Fish, sir," answered the boy.

"What sort of fish?"

"A whale, sir!" replied the boy.

A JOKE ON THE DOCTOR.

A physician boarded a crowded crosstown car. A woman was standing, and a big German seated, sprawling over twice the space necessary. Indignantly the doctor said to him:

"See here! Why don't you move a little, so that this tired woman may have a seat?"

For a moment the German looked dazed. Then a broad smile spread over his countenance as he answered:

"Say, dot's a joke on you, all right! Dot's my vife!"

* * *

KIND THAT MAKES BRYAN TIRED.

At a recent Missouri Chautauqua a man came to William J. Bryan and told him: "I have always voted for you ev'ry time you've run, Mister Brine, an' I'll be glad to vote fer you agin, as offen as possible." Mr. Bryan thanked him, and a fellow lyceum worker said:

"Don't you get awfully tired of having men come up and declare they've always voted for you and always will?"

"No, indeed," said Mr. Bryan. "The people that make me tired are the ones that say they've never voted for me and never will."

* * *

DIPLOMACY.

A policeman popped his head inside a crowded car.

"Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "but there are two swell thieves in here."

"Dear me!" cried a nervous-looking individual, in shocked tones. "I cannot risk my reputation in here."

Up jumped another gentleman with a gold watch chain and white waistcoat.

"I must get out at once," he said. "I have just taken some money out of the bank, and I won't chance being robbed."

The policeman then nudged the conductor.

"It's all right now, drive on; they've both got out."

* * *

NO CHANCE FOR THEM.

Brown and Black were arguing at their club on the question as to who should be the head of the house—the man or the woman.

"I'm the breadwinner," Black said, firmly, "and therefore I rule in my house."

"Well," said Brown, "before we were married, my wife and I made an agreement that I should make the rulings in all the major things, and she in all the minor ones."

"And how has it worked?" Black inquired.

Brown smiled wanly. "So far," he replied, "no major matters have come up."

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HOME AND HEALTH

PATRIOTIC CHRISTMAS PUDDING.

An American girl in England has sent her sister the following "three patriotic Christmas pudding recipes." She says that they were given by the King's chef, when he was demonstrating for the Ministry of Food at Devonshire. She adds:

"We tasted all three puddings, and I found the second one was the best. I think it was the oatmeal, which seemed to give it a nutty flavor. All the recipes are enough for six people. With prices as they are now, which correspond pretty nearly with ours, the first costs 24 cents. The second costs 28 cents. Materials for the third recipe cost 40 cents. These want to be made just a few days before Christmas, as they get dry if kept."

NO. 1.

Four ounces of flour.
Two ounces of bread.
One ounce of chopped suet.
One ounce of currants.
Two ounces of grated carrot.
Two ounces of grated potato.
One-half teaspoonful of ground ginger.
One-half teaspoonful of cinnamon.
One-half teaspoonful of carbonate of soda.
One-half egg.
One-half gill of milk.
One ounce of treacle or corn sirup.

NO. 2.

Four ounces of flour.
Two ounces of oatmeal.
Two ounces of ground rice.
Three ounces of fat.
One-half teaspoonful of salt.
One dessert spoonful of mixed spice.
Two ounces of sultanas.
Two ounces of mixed chopped peel.
One-half pound of apples.
Two ounces of grated carrot.
One egg (dried).
One-half gill of milk.
Two ounces of treacle.
Grated rind and juice of one-half lemon.
One-half teaspoonful of baking powder.

No. 3.

Four ounces of flour.
Four ounces of soaked bread.
Six ounces of chopped suet.
Quarter teaspoonful salt.
One dessert spoonful mixed spice.
Four ounces of sultanas.
Two ounces of mixed chopped peel.
One-half pound apples.
Two ounces grated carrot.
One egg (dried).
One-half gill milk.
Two ounces of treacle.
Grated rind and juice of half a lemon.

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HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS CANDY.

PEANUT CANDY—Shell, skin and split in halves one quart of fresh peanuts, cook together one cup of Porto Rico molasses, one cup brown sugar, one tablespoon of butter and one of vinegar. Boil until crisp when dropped in cold water, then add scant teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda and stir well, then pour it carefully over the peanuts, which you will have spread over bottom of pan. Let it cool quickly, and then break into irregular pieces when very hard.

MAPLE SUGAR CANDY—One cup milk, one cup cream, one pound maple sugar. Pound the sugar into small pieces and boil all together, stirring constantly. When it will harden in cold water, stir in as many chopped hickory nuts as the candy will take up, then turn into a shallow, buttered pan and when hard break into irregular pieces.

CHOCOLATE CREAMS—Put the white of one egg into a small glass, then measure an equal quantity of cold water; add a teaspoon of vanilla and beat thoroly. Beat in gradually enough confectioner's sugar to make a stiff mixture. Roll small pieces of it into the shape of a large thimble and place on a buttered tin in a cool place to harden. Melt two squares of chocolate in a bowl over teakettle. When the cream balls are hard dip them in the melted chocolate, using two steel forks; let them drain on the forks, then put in the tin again till dry.

CREAMED WALNUTS—For creamed walnuts use the same mixture with either lemon or vanilla flavoring. Break off pieces size of a nutmeg, roll until round and smooth, then press the halved walnut meats on each side, letting the cream show slightly between the meats. One egg requires about one and one-fourth pounds of sugar.

SULTANA CARAMELS—Two cups of granulated sugar, one-half cup of milk, one-fourth cup of butter, two squares of chocolate, one teaspoon of vanilla, one-half cup of English walnut meats cut in small pieces, two tablespoons of sultana raisins. Maple sugar can be substituted for molasses. Melt butter in saucepan, add sugar, milk, molasses and chocolate. After it begins to boil do not stir. Boil until it will form a soft ball when dropped into cold water. Add nuts, raisins and flavoring. Stir until it thickens. Pour into buttered tin. Cool and cut into squares.

FUDGE—Two cups of sugar, two squares of unsweetened chocolate or five tablespoons of cocoa, three-fourths of a cup of milk. Boil all together, stirring just enough to prevent burning, until when tried in cold water it will form a soft ball. Just before taking off, put in butter size of an egg. When melted, take off at once and add one teaspoon of vanilla. Beat for five minutes or until it begins to harden. The longer it is beaten the better. Pour into a hollow buttered pan and mark off in squares before it gets too hard.

NOUGATS—Grease a square, shallow pan with butter, fill with hickory nut kernels, almonds cut in thin slices, cocoanut chopped fine and a few bits of candied orange peel. Boil two pounds of granulated sugar and one cup of water together without stirring until it hardens, then add a tablespoon lemon juice and pour it in the pan over the nuts. When cool mark the narrow strips.

CHOCOLATE CARAMELS—Take four cups of brown sugar, one-half cake of chocolate in whole piece, one cup of milk, butter size of an egg, and a tablespoon of vanilla extract. Put all in a large pan except the vanilla and let boil without stirring until when dropped in cold water a ball is formed. Then take from fire, add vanilla and pour into buttered pans. Allow to cool, then cut into squares.

❧

HEALTH NOTES.

To discover the obscure pain in baby's ear is not always a simple matter, even for the alert and observant specialist. True enough, the little hands find their way at times to the neighborhood of the sensitive area, but this is by no means as common a signal of earache as one might expect. It is only when the baby's cries, as well as the presence of fever, cannot be laid to other portions of the infant's anatomy, that the ear falls under suspicion. Then the nurse or parent, by gently pressing in front, over and behind the baby's ear will discover a tender point by the increased intensity of the child's cries, or by some other overt act of pain. Once convinced that the trouble is in the ear, temporary expedients of relief and comfort should be followed as soon as possible by consulting with the family doctor. In this way much subsequent disturbance of hearing may be prevented.

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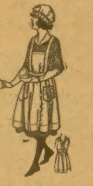
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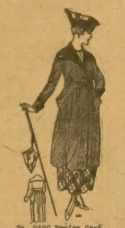
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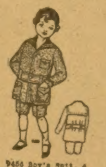
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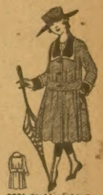
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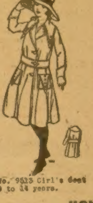
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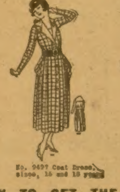
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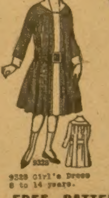

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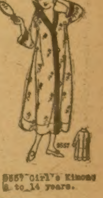

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THE LOST BOX

By Ellen Lee Wyman

I AM the copper tea kettle that simmers and steams much of the time on the stove of the Wilsons' ranch home away out in Oregon. I am very bright, because I am kept clean and am rubbed up every day.

But, after all, the most of my brightness comes from reflecting that which is all around. There is a great deal if one only have the habit of noticing, for there is sunlight, firelight, lamplight and lovelight in the faces of those around. Why, I can find brightness to reflect all the time; no wonder that I am the brightest thing in the house.

I am not so very new, for I was one of the Wilsons' wedding presents, and I came out with them from Chicago to help them make a home here. That seems years and years ago. In that time three babies have come out here to help make a home and a family. Bless them! They certainly do help—we could not get along without them now at all. Percy was the first—he is 10 years old now; then there are the two little girls, Martha and Billee. How I would like to tell you all about them! Some time perhaps I will, but now I must tell you about Christmas, and what happened.

Of course, you all know that Christmas is the very best time of all the year anywhere and everywhere. Just so it is out on this beautiful ranch, where the white-capped hills look down on us thru all the months, and we in turn look down across the wonderful orchards into the lovely valley, where the broad Columbia River flows so grandly. Yes, tho it is good here all the time, Christmas is the best of all.

You see, there are no stores here for miles and dozens of miles and miles, so there is nothing to buy, and in getting ready for Christmas you have to make all your presents out of your head—I mean out of whatever you can think of and make up.

Always every year the week before Christmas there comes to us the grandest big box from the grandfathers and grandmothers and aunts and uncles and cousins and friends back in the old home places. This box is wonderful, a regular Santa Claus mine of all the good things you can think of.

I do not need to tell you what there was in it; just what everybody wanted, and you know what everybody wants at Christmas. Oh, it almost makes my sides ache to think of the rollicking good times we have all had in opening and emptying those blessed boxes.

Let me tell you right here that this box matter wasn't one-sided—not a bit of it. Half the fun we, out in Oregon, had when we opened our box came from knowing that out at the other end of the home line another box was being opened—the very one we had packed weeks before with our wonderful fruits and good things, and had sent to the dear old home in Chicago.

All these past Christmases the father and mother had set up a tree and trimmed and loaded it, and had stuffed all the stockings which hung by the fireplace, and then had crept off to bed, leaving me to keep guard all night with the treasures of the Santa Claus box; and there being just enough fire to keep me warm, I would purr cozily with the Christmas Spirits till the sun peeped in to see if all was ready, and then with a shout the fun would begin.

But this Christmas things were somehow different; matters had been a little slow and dull for some time, fruit had not been plenty, a cow had died, chickens would not lay eggs. However, a splendid good box had been sent off at the usual time, but no box had come. One day after another of the week before Christmas came and went, but no box came. I heard the father and mother talking about it evenings after the youngsters had gone to bed. They spoke of a very severe storm across the plains, of a train being wrecked, of others being delayed. The mail was several days late, and only brought about half as many letters, cards and packages as usual. These were laid aside to open on Christmas. Even the children's faces began to look serious, and that is dreadful when children look sorry at Christmastide. It was pretty dismal and dreary when the day before came and no Box! Morning passed, no Box! Afternoon slipped away, no Box!

It began to grow dark; the little noses flattened against the window panes as the children watched if possibly the wagon might bring the Box, for the father had driven down to the railroad station to see for himself if there wasn't something there. It was a long, hard drive, and it was quite dark before we heard the team rumbling and tugging up the hill. The mother and the children and Tillie, the girl who helped with the work, and Bouncer and Boxer, the dogs, and Mincer, the cat, all rushed to the door to welcome father and the Box, but no Box was there! No, the father came in rather cold and chilly, bringing various packages of groceries and so forth, but nothing that looked Christmasy, nothing done up in tissue paper and tied with ribbons. Well, it was rather quiet for a few moments. Nobody seemed quite ready for such a disappointment.

Yes, it was rather quiet, but not for long. The father and mother looked at each other and then at the children, then quickly exclaimed:

"Never mind about the Box! Even if it isn't here, we are all here and Christmas eve is here, and we will enjoy ourselves and have a fine; good time. All the Rowleys are coming over to dinner tomorrow, we have plenty to eat, we will have games and a grand, good time. Never mind about the Box!"

Well, they all joined in that splendid spirit, swallowed the lumps in their throats and gathered about the supper table, a hearty, happy group. Tho let me tell you privately right here, I did see dear little Martha step behind the door where the towel hung, and quietly wipe away some tears.

After supper Percy asked with some concern:

"Shall we hang up our stockings?"

"Sure," answered the father. "It would be insulting to Santa Claus not to do that. He will have an apple or some trifle in his sack for us. Come, we must make it look as fine as we can." So they all went out and brought in evergreen from the woods and made the room look so sweet and pretty; it was a real pleasure just to see it. "The stockings were hung by the chimney with care," very secret packages were stuffed into them of treasures prepared by the children, the stories were told, the carols were sung—I joined in the singing, too—and the children went off to bed with shining faces and light hearts with the faith that it would all be all right somehow.

But how? I admit I was puzzled. I slowed down steam and felt a bit disconsolate, as the father and mother looked at each other again, and said:

"What shall we do?"

But it was only for a few moments. Mothers always know some good way of doing things, and fathers always know how to do them. The mother brought out a box of toys, all sorts of tiny things she had bought long ago, and a deserted village which Percy had outgrown. This was an inspiration to Tillie, who was a young foreigner with all sorts of quaint notions.

"I tell you, Mrs. Wilson," she exclaimed. "We make a Christmas Land! I know! I can show."

So these three people put their heads together and their hands to work, and this is what to "my wondering eyes did appear:"

With the molding board and the ironing board they made a hill in one corner, about two feet high. They covered it with cotton so it looked as tho a beautiful snow had settled there. They stuck in twigs and small branches of evergreen, making a little forest on top, running down one side. They took a small looking glass and set it in the midst of the snow country with bushes about it, a little pond. They scattered the tiny houses about on the side and at the bottom. The little old figure of Santa Claus, which always came out every Christmas, was placed at the top. Then they made funny little people out of clothespins, and some with hickory nut faces, and dressed them in gay paper clothes, and they were soon wandering thru the woods, coasting down the hill and sliding on the pond. Then all the toy animals which the children had were let loose in this fairyland. Nothing was ever prettier or more fascinating.

The various packages and bundles were brought out and piled about the fireplace. Tillie put a funny gingerbread boy in each stocking, just peeking over the top. So, altogether, the display was fine and promising.

Then all was quiet for the night; the father and mother, as pleased as children, went away, and, as so many times before, I was left to watch.

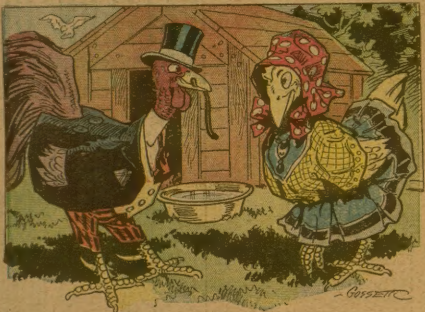
Pussy purred by the stove, and I purred on top, and sweetly in the quiet there came the Christmas Spirits sliding in on the moonbeams. I could hear their sweet song of old as they came. They were Peace, Content and all the fair beautiful rich blessings of Love. When they saw the Christmas Land all ready for them they loved it, and joining hands they danced all over it and about it until the sunbeams faded them away.

I do not need to tell you how delighted the children were as they came trooping in. What a happy time they did have! And when the Rowleys came, bringing their appetites, everybody was more than satisfied, and they all declared they had never enjoyed a merrier Christmas.

What is that? You ask if they ever received the Box? No, and they never will. It was on the train that was wrecked. And the children are wondering if by any chance some family of children out on the plains could have found their toys and things in the smashup.

Billee thinks so, and she says: "I'm sure Santa Claus would look out that those things weren't wasted."

Then Martha said, "Well, if that's so, there were two Christmases instead of one," and I somehow think she is right.



"May I offer you this nice fat angleworm, Miss Leghorn?"
"Thank you so much, but Dr. Quack has told me to keep on a light diet, so I'm eating nothing but glowworms."

❧

THE BIRDS' TREE.

It is to be hoped that you have done your shopping for the birds, but if in the Christmas hurry you have forgotten it you can probably beg some suitable gifts, for it is not a serious matter to select presents for your friends the chickadees, the nuthatches, the sparrows, the creepers and the woodpeckers, who for some reason like to stay around during these cold Northern winters.

Suppose we give them a Christmas tree surprise. Any kind of tree will do, provided it isn't too tall or too wide-spreading. As for the gifts: Take a little bag of net and stuff it with nuts. That's a present for the junce and the nuthatch. Fill another net bag with sunflower seed or millet and hemp, for the finch and the sparrow. Tie a piece of twine around a chunk of suet or fat pork and give the woodpecker a surprise.

Breadcrumbs, cracked corn, wheat, canary seed—these are some of the gifts which the birds will appreciate. As a final surprise, take a cocoanut shell, with a good-sized hole in either side, and fill it with fresh pork fat, bacon and nut kernels.

Get up early Christmas morning and watch the birds feast from their own Christmas tree. It's almost as much fun as watching for Santa Claus.

❧

MORE IMPORTANT.

They were having an argument as to whether it was correct to say of a hen "she is setting" or "sitting," and not being able to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, they decided to submit the problem to Farmer Welks.

"My friends," said he, "that don't interest me at all. What I want to know when I hear a hen cackle is whether she is laying or lying."

SEEIN' CHRISMUS FINGS.

My papa's nice mos' all 'e time,
'N' mamma's sweet 'es she c'n be;
But 'way downtown zey's cross when I'm
'Ess lookin' 'roun' what I c'n see.

Zey say, "Come on! 'Oo'll break 'oo neck!
'Ess lookin' back 'n' back 'n' back!
Don't 'oo know how to walk? I 'speck
I'll have to give 'oo head a crack!"

'Oo fink it nice? 'Ess w'en I see
Some grea', big, funnies fing; 'n' I
Hol' han's 'n' look 'n' he or she
'Ess pull me 'roun' 'n' make me cry?

My papa's tall 'n' big aroun',
'N' mamma's mos' up to 'is chin;
Zey walk so fas' 'at fings downtown
'Ess fly as we go pas'; 'n' in

'E crowds I 'ess can't see one fing
'Less I look back 'n' back 'n' back;
'N' if I do, my ma won't sing
To me in bed, wiv night all black!

"I'm 'ess too tired," she says, "to sing!
I tug 'n' tug 'n' 'oo turned 'roun'
'N' won't see where 'oo's goin' a fing!
'Oo'll stay wiv Ann when I's downtown!"

I fink 'at God don't know 'bout girls
Who's 'ess too small to look 'n' see;
I'd turn 'e faces 'roun', wiv curls
All hangin' down in front o' me.

—Hollis W. Field.

❧

OLD CUSTOMS.

The bearing with rejoicing and caroling the great yule log; the decking of church and home with greens; the superstitions connected with the mistletoe; the wassail bowl and mince pies and plum puddings; all the quaint old customs can be traced back to festivals held in ancient times at the period of the winter solstice.

Usually at these festivals a gentler spirit prevailed than at other seasons. In the Saturnalia, all—master and man—were considered equal, and at Christmas there has always been a feeling that distinction of class should be forgotten, and only the fact of a common humanity be remembered.

❧

THEIR PLOT.

"Looky yur, Bearcat!" sternly said Mr. Gap Johnson of Rumpus Ridge, Ark., addressing his 4-year-old son. "If you don't behave yourself better Sandy Claws will just come down the chimney, whistle, and go right back up again."

"Like heck, he will!" replied the little lad. "Me and Blister and Runt and Coonrod and Jeff'son Davis and William Jennin's and Bragg are going to set all the steel traps in a half-circle in front of the fireplace and then go to sleep by 'em. And if the old cuss don't give up what he's got he'll stay in them there traps till morning!"

❧

INCREASING WEALTH.

I will tell you a plan for gaining wealth,
Better than banking, trading, or leases;
Take a bank-note and fold it up,
And you'll find your wealth in-creases.

This wonderful plan without danger or loss,
Keeps your cash in your hands and nothing to trouble it,
And every time that you fold it across,
'Tis plain as the light of the day that you double it.

❧

NUMBER ONE.

"I tell you," said Robbie, eating his peach,
And giving his sister none,
"I believe in the good old saying that each
Should look out for number one."

"Why, yes," answered Katie, wise little elf,
"But the counting should be begun
With the other one instead of yourself—
And he should be number one."

❧

VERY TRUE.

"Well, Charlie, did you enjoy your visit to the Isle of Wight?" asked a young man of his friend.

"Yes, thank you," was the reply. "I enjoyed myself very much; but it's a peculiar place."

"How is that?"

"Why, Tom, it has Needles you can't thread, Freshwater you can't drink, Cowes you can't milk and Newport you can't bottle."

❧

EFFORT SAVED.

"Won't you be glad when I start to school?" asked Willie one day of his parents, as they sat at lunch.

"Why, dear?" asked his mother, in surprise.

"Well, then you an' Dad can cut out this spellin' of words that you don't want me to understand."

❧

THE WORLD'S WAY.

Jolly the fellow who's down today,
Give him a smile for his sorrow;
The world sometimes has a funny way,
And you may be down tomorrow.